



Joint Master of Public Administration Program

Spotlight on MPA Students

Our MPA students are a diverse and interesting group of people. In the next few months, we will be featuring profiles of some of these students, who will tell us a bit about where they are from, their education, their experience in the MPA program, their career aspirations and what they do in their spare time.



Pieter and his son, Simon.

Pieter Prinsloo

Where are you from?

I was born in South Africa. I can trace my heritage back to 1682, when my ancestors arrived in the Cape of Good Hope along with other Dutch Huguenots to settle the refueling station needed by the Dutch East India Company for ships travelling en-route to India. My family immigrated to Canada in 1999 and eventually settled in rural Manitoba.

Tell us a bit about your undergrad education. How far along are you in the MPA program, and are you full-time or part-time?

I have a double Honours BA in Politics and German as well as an MA in German, both from the University of Manitoba. I am currently in my second year of part-time studies in the MPA program and anticipate completing the degree requirements in 2020.

Many MPA students have full-time careers and study part-time.

Can you tell us a bit about the work you do?

I have been with the City of Winnipeg for over four years, and currently hold the position of Information Coordinator within the Clerk's Office. This includes clerking the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee, the Mayor's Age-Friendly and Seniors Advisory Committee, the Winnipeg Food Council and the Vehicles for Hire Appeal Board. My job also includes other duties such as the consolidation of by-laws, and participating on administrative steering and working groups.

What attracted you to the MPA program?

I was drawn to the MPA program partly because I could pursue it part-time. I also liked the fact that the program content would complement the work that I do every day.

What knowledge/skills are you looking to acquire in the MPA program?

I aim to apply the theoretical aspects of my MPA studies to the practical application of my job in the Clerk's Department. Understanding aspects of public administration such as fiscal policy is invaluable in understanding how decisions are made, and how that impacts public administration on a day-to-day basis.

Are there any MPA courses you find particularly interesting and/or useful? Why?

Because the material covered is directly related to my work, the Local Public Administration and Housing Policy Courses have been a highlight for me.

Has there been a particular MPA course/experience/prof that has inspired you in some special way?

Professor Levasseur has been a great professor and inspiration in my MPA studies. She consistently delivers practical examples from her own background in a way that enhances student comprehension and keeps course material relatable and entertaining.

What is your dream job?

My dream job isn't necessarily specific to a title or organization but, rather, is one in which I can work with skilled individuals and be able to contribute in a meaningful way to compliment the work of my peers.

Assuming you have any, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I am married and have two wonderfully 'energetic' children under the age of three! I also play bass in a George Thorogood-inspired blues rock band by the name of 'Cobra Snake Necktie'. Between shows, I enjoy playing records for my kids, from my own collection, which includes blues, country, rockabilly, thrash, prog rock, heavy metal, and roots rock. I also like to take my English bulldog, Winston, to the dog park for a good run!

Seamas Finnerty

Where are you from?

I am originally from Estevan, Saskatchewan, where I lived until I was eight. When my parents retired 15 years ago, we moved to Vancouver Island. I recently moved from BC to Winnipeg to begin the MPA program.

Tell us a bit about your undergrad education. How far along are you in the MPA Program, and are you studying full- or part-time?

In 2017, I completed a BA in Business Admin, with a major in Economics and Management, at Vancouver Island University in BC. This is my very first year in a master's Program, and I am attending full time.

Do you work part-time?

Yes, I currently work part-time for Sherwin-Williams, the largest paint company in the world. This was actually my very first job, and I've been with the company for five years.

What do you like about the MPA program?

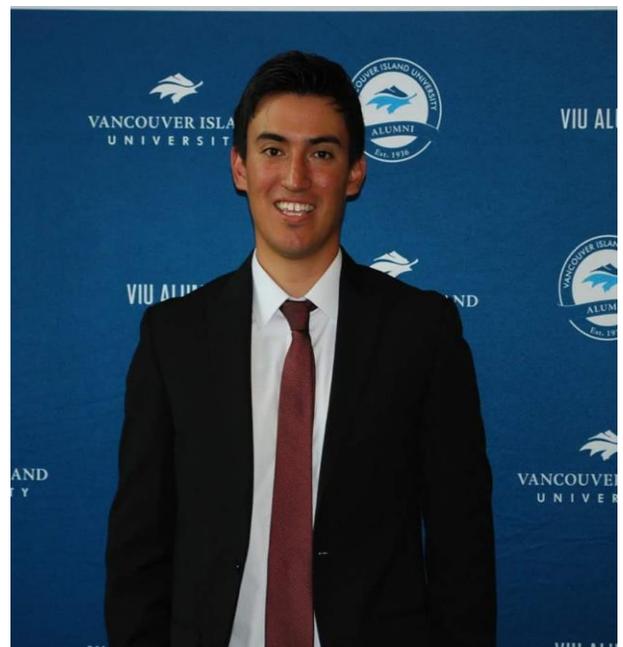
The MPA program is very communication-based, if that makes sense. It's a great environment where people can not only share their opinions but their ideas, as well, ideas that can maybe one day make Canada even better.

Are there any MPA courses you find particularly interesting and/or useful?

Public Policy Process and Issues is a great class. It wasn't until I began taking it that I realised just how difficult it is to think about and create policies! Just when you think you've covered all the areas of focus, there are others that pop up. It's very eye-opening and makes you appreciate how much work our public administrators do!

Has there been a particular MPA course/experience/prof that has inspired you in some special way?

I can't say that something has inspired me yet, but I am really looking forward to presenting a class project to a Deputy Minister. The fact that we even get the opportunity to present to a real live deputy minister is amazing! Very few people in their public careers get to do this. I'm also looking forward to the Co-op work term that starts next spring.



As a part-time student who has not yet started on a career, how do you plan to apply the skills you learn here?

I am learning skills that have already helped me in my present part-time work, such as problem-solving and communicating with individuals. The MPA program is great in that it teaches you skills that you can use in any job, every day. In the future, I aspire to be able to solve problems and to resolve very tough issues, no matter what job I am doing. The MPA program is giving me the tools to be able to do this.

What has your experience been like, moving to Winnipeg to study? Do you have any advice for other students who may be thinking of taking the MPA program here?

Winnipeg is a beautiful town. It has so much culture and lots of different - and very good - food! Don't come thinking that winter is miserable or you'll definitely have a tough time. Yes, it's cold, very cold, but that means there are a lot of special things to do here, like visiting ice castles and skating on the Red River for kilometres. You need to embrace it and just appreciate how different Winnipeg is from other places!

What is your dream job?

I wish I could say what my dream job is. Working for the UN would be really cool, or maybe even Interpol. But working in Ottawa, at the centre of the federal government, in those beautiful buildings, would be equally amazing.

Assuming you have any, what do you like to do in your spare time?

I play the piano and hold my ARCT (Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto). It's something I've done all my life and I truly love it. I also love to ski and hope to heli-ski one day. To relax, I watch my favourite TV show, *How I Met Your Mother*. I've watched it I don't know how many times, from start to finish, and I always laugh at the same jokes. It's a great show.



Qi An (Angie)

Tell us a bit about your country of origin.

I am from Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China. I have been in Winnipeg for two and a half years, and prior to that, in the US for three years, where my husband still works.

China is a country that has developed rapidly in the past ten years. The culture is very different from Western countries, of course, and especially in the area of public policy and governance. China is very unique because of its history, traditions and its people.

Tell us a bit about your previous university education.

How far along are you in the MPA Program, and are you full-time or part-time?

I earned my bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Changsha, Hunan Province, China in 2012. After graduation, I went to Rochester Institute of Technology for graduate studies in Human Resource Development. This is my third year as a full-

time MPA student.

Do you work part-time and, if so, what do you do?

I work on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at Manitoba Housing, which is part of my MPA Co-op position.

What attracted you to the MPA program?

While doing graduate studies in Human Resources in the US, I developed an interest in analyzing labor relations and policies. In 2015, I decided to further my studies in this by applying to the MPA Program.

Are there any MPA courses you find particularly interesting and/or useful? Why?

There are a lot of MPA courses I find interesting and very useful. One in particular is Theories and Issues in Public

Administration, taught by Dr. Andrea Rounce. My classmates have different background, such as in aviation, crown companies, government, and media. Dr. Rounce also has invited guest speakers who work in the government. At the start of every class, we share and talk about the news as it relates to public policy. This course helped me a lot. It taught me to pay attention to public policy issues and to learn from others' perspectives.

Has there been a particular MPA course/experience/prof that has inspired you in some special way?

I think Professor Aasland is the professor who has inspired me the most. I have taken two of his courses: Regulation in Canada and Housing Policies. He always encouraged us to think and talk about topics which interest us. I was interested in and working on projects having to do with homelessness, and he gave me a lot of valuable insights and suggestions. He also inspired me to pursue a Co-op placement with Manitoba Housing.

What particular knowledge/skills are you looking to acquire through your MPA studies?

I am developing skills that I hope will help me be competitive in the job market. I am learning and using applied quantitative and qualitative research methods to write evaluation reports. I also continue to learn in-depth analytical skills and critical thinking in analyzing public policies.

As an international student, what do you hope to do with your MPA degree? Have there been any particular (perhaps unexpected) benefits to studying in Winnipeg? What advice would you give to other international students coming to study here?

Even though I am an International student, my plan is to settle down either in Canada or the US after graduation, especially since my husband is presently working in the US. After graduation, I hope to start my career as a policy analyst in government or with a non-profit organization. The MPA Program is essential to students who are interested in working in the public sector. I am hoping to broaden my job choices with the MPA degree. It also adds much value to network with people who study political science and who work on public policy.

Compared to other programs, the MPA Program is very practical and provides many opportunities for International students, especially the Co-op component and student awards. I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Bird and Dr. Moore, who help MPA students foster their practical working skills through the Co-op program. This is a great opportunity for International students to work and learn in the Canadian workplace and public sector. Most of the Co-op placements are open to everyone, and the selection process is fair. Organizations are looking for qualified candidates based on their interests and their previous work and study experience. It does not matter that your English is not perfect or that you don't have a high local status. The MPA Program and its Co-op placements provide a fair and open environment in which a student's success is determined by their experience and ability.

What is your DREAM job?

My dream job is to work on something I am interested in, and which also allows me to advocate for people in need. I hope to have an opportunity to work at the United Nations and contribute to humanity, such as by helping the Yazidi women in Iraq.

What do you like to do in your spare time (assuming you have spare time!)?

In my spare time, I like to go to the gym, go shopping and listen to and play music. I sometimes go to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra with my friends; tickets are only \$15 if you are under 30! I also like to invite a couple of friends to my place for hot pot in the winter. Every Sunday morning, I go to church. I have also volunteered at the Humane Society since 2017; this gives me the opportunity to know people and learn to care. To relax, I watch *This Is Us* on Netflix. I think it might be the best TV series after *Friends*. It presents family, love, and friendship. I would recommend that everyone watch it. I also like to play video games with my husband. Since our relationship is long distance right now, he gave me an X-box and we connect by playing video games in the evening. We love the Ubisoft games!

The MPA Program is offered jointly by the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba.

Program information and application instructions can be found at this link:

http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/political_studies/master_pa/index.html

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