The Boom Was Real, Until It Wasn’t

A Sudden Decrease in the Marginal Efficiency of Capital

By Gregory P. Nowell
In Praise of Intellectual Diversity

Everyone knows what diversity means when the word is used in an organizational context. We usually think of the diversity of personnel in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and other personal attributes. In higher education, it is also important to have intellectual diversity — variety in disciplinary perspectives, the methods used by investigators when they do research, and the substantive areas of specialization such as economics, history, political science, sociology and psychology, to name a few. For a public affairs school, diversity is very important and I am proud to say that at Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, intellectual diversity is one of our hallmarks. This is exemplified by the local to global reach of our faculty and the course offerings in our six degree programs. Student interests are similarly broad and span local government, state government and intergovernmental relations, and public policies including trade, health, education and homeland and international security. Meanwhile at the College, students and faculty in the field of political theory study and write about important issues that influence the body politic.

This issue of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy News Magazine highlights our intellectual diversity. The local to global graphic featured at the center of the magazine shows you the breadth of research activity that goes on at the College, and you have to admit that it is truly impressive. Where else can you find studies of traffic safety, gender disparities, social movements in Southeast Asia, trade policy, international sanctions, and terrorist networks, plus a fresh look at the philosopher John Locke, all under one roof? Well, actually there are several Rachel. Rockefeller College is spread out all over the city of Albany.) The brief articles and profiles further showcase the heterodoxy of the College from inquiry into the politics of food, to procedural justice in public personnel systems, to the politics of gender. Yes, we still pay much attention to events in state government and our students, faculty and research centers are engaged in projects that are especially germane to the challenges confronting state and local governments in the United States, and New York in particular. The Rockefeller Institute of Government — the latest addition to the College — continually receives praise and recognition for its nonpartisan, high-quality analyses of state and local fiscal trends across the country. So, enjoy the new look of our newsletter, but most of all, enjoy the diversity of ideas. As always, I welcome your comments.
Reopening Locke: Rockefeller College Scholar Takes a Fresh Look at the Great Political Thinker

Hundred of years of scholarship on John Locke, the brilliant 17th century English thinker who profoundly influenced the American founding fathers, have stilled established the conventional wisdom on the man and his work. Nevertheless, new insights into the philosopher are being offered by an icon of the Age of Enlightenment, John Locke is responsible for such works as The Second Treatise on Government and An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, two of his most celebrated and influential works. Locke's ideas have had a profound impact on political thought and continue to be relevant today. Rockefeller College Political Science Professor David Rousseau uses a team-based learning approach that divides the class into groups or “dining tables” to achieve his primary objective—teaching students about argumentation. Working in groups, students are required to call upon when their team goes head-to-head with another team. The Patroon Room dining area in the UAlbany Campus Center becomes a makeshift classroom for the semester where students gather to enjoy a bite, have a meal, and participate in a variety of activities. Among other issues the professor serves up for consideration during the 12-week course are: sustainable agriculture, genetically modified foods, organic food, local food, fair trade, the organic food movement, and the culinary arts. In preparation for the 12-week course, the professor served up a variety of foods to whet students' appetites for debate about Locke's ideas. Chef Ryan Poole was tasked with providing a meal and he delivered a dish that was both delicious andpolitical. The meal included Aloo Keema, a meat and potato curry from India; Bacaloa, or salt cod, popular in the Basque region; and winter corn chowder and corn, zucchini and tomato pie, two Native American specialties. “Chartwells’ Chef Ryan Poole has a million things to do but he made time to participate,” remarked Rousseau. “I’d love to have the chef there every week making dinner right in class.”

David Rousseau is optimistic that his out-of-the-box approach will benefit students in the long run. “My hope is that five years from now, or ten years from now, or twenty years from now, if you look back and see how the course is framed, you will really think how this information, how to make a choice, you will understand an important god.”

“I’m arguing that there’s something new and better to find in these deeply familiar ideas.”

“Everything about food is political,” asserts Rousseau. “How we define organic is political. What the food pyramid looks like is like. What the food pyramid looks like is political. People’s purchases have political implications. When they buy fair trade, that’s a commitment to justice and economic justice.”

“Examining his texts is about ‘critical inheritance,’ meaning these ideas we’ve inherited from Locke are influential; we need to question them. I’m trying to introduce a less familiar version of Locke who uses language and political argument familiar to ordinary people.”

As an offshoot of his Age of Enlightenment course, Rousseau will teach a one-credit class called Imagination and Thought in 18th Century. The course will focus on Locke’s thought and its relationship to the thought of David Hume and Immanuel Kant. Finally, Professor Rousseau admits the class is “very different” from his usual teaching style. “I’m really pushing my students to think about Locke in a different way. They’ve had a lot of practice on paper, but this is the first time they are meeting Locke as a political thinker and not as a philosopher. I’m really pushing my students to think about Locke in a different way.”

“I’m pretty hard claim to make that other 300 years have a new interpretation of Locke. I think that’s what I’m trying to do.”

— John Locke
In 1936, Keynes attributed economic crises to “a sudden decrease in the marginal efficiency of capital.” This sentence is at the heart of the current recession, so let us untangle its current relevance. Today’s financial wizards made a simple choice to chase an increasing volume of fees by making loans to people with less money and questionable credit histories. In doing so, they created a boom just before they created a bust.

Finance is organized on a mass production basis, like McDonald’s. If I put 99 cents into making a hamburger and sell it for $1, the common wisdom is that I have made a 1 percent profit. But if I roll 99 cents into a bun and meat to sell tomorrow, and sell it again, and do that all year, I make one penny 365 times. My annual rate of profit on 99 cents tied up in hamburger meat and buns is therefore 365 pennies or slightly more than 365 percent.

The same point applies to finance. If I set up a credit card operation, I pay merchants 98 cents on every dollar they bill me for customer transactions. I collect from my cardholders the full amount and net 2 cents on every dollar. That is roughly a 24 percent rate of return on the capital I use to finance merchant transactions. In the housing market, if I advance $200,000 against the purchase of a house, I collect $10,000 in fees, and sell the mortgage to investors. I get my $200,000 back, and next week, repeat the operation. In 52 weeks, I earn $520,000 in fees on $200,000 in capital, or nominally 260 percent annual return—though we are abstracting out many costs.

These examples suffice to show that modern consumer finance is essentially the same as modern fast food: profit depends hugely on volume, and markups that seem small measured against the value of a single transaction become large over the course of a year.

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The financial industry sought customers of lower income and (not always the same thing) lower creditworthiness. And, it had to convince investors that these higher risk loans were worth buying. Borrowers were airy assured they could lose nothing so long as home values rose. Hand waving and statistical modeling assured investors, who bought these mortgages in bundles worth billions, that default rates were statistically certain to stay within predicted values. Everyone knows some customers won’t pay their loans. But the predicted rates of default proved wrong, and the high volume finance business model crashed.

Pushing For More Customers

How do we maintain sales volume in finance? We can put people into exotic mortgages that force them to refinance in a few years. That guarantees a new stream of fees. Also, we have to find ways to bring new people into the market because, try as they might, consumers can’t get into the mood for a new house—so banks need new customers.

The boom just before they created a bust.
People who were already under pressure due to rising commodity prices (gasoline and food) are now also out of work, and they too have become candidates for loan defaults. Sectors which have nothing to do with housing are in retreat. Detroit was already suffocating from high fuel prices when the cutoff of new car lending rolled over the automakers like an avalanche.

Walking Off The Cliff

So “a sudden decrease in the marginal efficiency of capital” happens this way: the first 10 million loans are conservative. The second 10 million loans are a bit riskier but are based on business sense. The third 10 million loans are made with an expert’s eye to managing known risks. The fourth 10 million loans might work out if “current conditions prevail.” The banks move through the tiers of creditworthiness because they are eager to keep up the high volumes that are their lifeblood. But current conditions don’t prevail, and the predicted rate of loss on loans is swamped by the actual rate of loss. Investors panic, which compounds losses even further. The system adjusts by choking off new loans; unemployment is the immediate consequence and rockets the loan default rate higher. Bankers were making money with their first 10 million loans, and their second, and their third. But they discovered, in the fourth, that they had walked off a cliff with a mob of like-minded cartoon characters. So long as all agree that all is well, they walk on air. When they look down, they all fall, and everything they do to prevent the fall makes them fall faster.

Income Inequality: The Weakness That Banking Regulation Will Not Cure

Now I certainly will not discourage banking regulation as one cure to the marginal-efficiency of capital cliff. But such regulation, by slowing down lending, also slows down real economic growth, and buys stability with higher unemployment. I am not one who believes that higher permanent rates of unemployment are a good trade-off for boom-bust cycles—nor was Keynes. The real issue underlying the housing bust is a suburban finance model that works fairly well for the 20 percent of the country which takes home 50 percent of the aggregate income, does not work well—and even becomes brutally exploitative—when the need for more business drives lenders into the 80 percent of the country that divides the remaining 50 percent of the income.
All the projects I’m working on right now tie together under the idea of building trust in public organizations. I’m also interested in civil service reform efforts that are efforts to change the rules under which government employees are managed. At both the federal and state levels, there has been a lot of reform over the past decade. These reforms are impacting trust in the workplace, not necessarily in a positive way. My current project on civil service reform is looking at the Securities and Exchange Commission. Over the last eight to ten years, they’ve been given authority to redesign their personnel system, and we’re looking at all of these financial sector crises. They’ve been implementing changes. Some of them have not worked out as well. Employees organized in the middle of all these changes. The unions filed complaints about the performance appraisal system. The agency last year decided that it had to redesign their system. For now, I’m trying to see how much has actually happened during the reforms.

**Q:** What other projects do you have in the pipeline?

**A:** I’m starting a new project examining the link between performance appraisal systems, perceptions of fairness, and organizational performance. I recently acquired a dataset on federal performance appraisal systems, which have been dramatically reformed in many agencies over the last decade, and I’m using more federal employee survey data. Appraisals are important tools for holding government employees accountable, and managers often have a very difficult time doing them — if they invest any time at all. However, we know very little about the context of the systems and how appraisals impact other important outcomes. Everyone claims that if we hold civil servants more accountable, all the problems of government will be fixed. I question that argument, but until now we had no data to make an effective case.

A third project focuses on labor relations more broadly. Going back to the civil service reform efforts, when Homeland Security was created and when the Department of Defense was given its personnel flexibilities, they were both given broad authority to change their personnel systems. Managers often have a very difficult time doing them — if they invest any time at all. However, we know very little about the context of the systems and how appraisals impact other important outcomes. Everyone claims that if we hold civil servants more accountable, all the problems of government will be fixed. I question that argument, but until now we had no data to make an effective case.

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**Q:** Why is this research important?

**A:** There are a lot of really esoteric personnel management issues out there that really only 10 or 15 people would care about. But I really think that issues of fairness and trust are issues everybody can relate to. We all want to be treated fairly by our supervisors. We all want to be in a work environment where we trust our colleagues and we trust our superiors. That makes us feel valued. That’s why I chose this topic. So we can have a structured way to talk about these issues.

**Q:** Does working at Rockefeller College offer you any special advantages in terms of your research?

**A:** Part of the challenge in the field of public administration broadly, is that personnel management as a field of study is neglected and gets short shrift. There are very few people who actually focus their research on personnel issues extensively as opposed to broader management questions. One reason I’ve been happy here is because research on personnel issues is valued. Focusing on personnel is particularly valuable being in Albany creates a unique opportunity for us because we have the state agencies and union leadership all together here and they are eager for help because many of them have a lot of challenges and are not sure how to narrow them down. I’ve been slowly building that network and it’s already bearing fruit.
Mr. Zimmerman Looks Back

Q. What sparked his interest in an academic career? A. Joe jokingly replied that his interest began during his time at the University of Rochester, where he was a member of the track team. He continued that he began to develop an interest in political science while serving in the military during the Korean War.

Q. At what point did Joe become interested in the public sector? A. Joe became interested in the public sector while he was a training officer. The experience of working in the public sector and the opportunity to influence policy decisions led him to a career in public administration.

Such recognition highlights Zimmerman’s contributions to the field of political science, particularly in the area of state and local government. His work has had a significant impact on the study of federalism, and he is widely recognized for his expertise in the area.

Professor Zimmerman can be equally proud of the loyalty he has engendered among his students. “Joe has a consummate knowledge of New York government structures while teaching in Massachusetts. While    

The Scholarly Mr. Zimmerman

A Look Back at a Long and Distinguished Career

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Zimmerman's recall of institutional activity was also noted. “I was always impressed by Joe’s institutional knowledge,” observed a colleague. “As the department has grown, Joe has become an invaluable resource. There is not a person here who has a greater institutional memory than Mr. Zimmerman.”

Joe’s command of both politics and government is noted by those who work closely with him. Speaking of Zimmerman’s command of civic affairs as a youth, and in 1947, while still a high school student, he helped start the Keene (NH) Civic League. With his Civic League partners, Joe made his first foray into public affairs to advocate for a city manager form of government in place of the weak mayor structure that existed in Keene.

Brian Nickerson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Iona College, and a former doctoral student, in a joint statement. The Rockefeller College News Magazine | Winter 2010/2011
Faculty News

Rockefeller College Welcomes New Faculty

Younes D. Harouna has joined Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy as an assistant professor of public administration. Dr. Harouna comes to Rockefeller from the Center for Great Politics and Social Responsibility, University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, where she supervised the capstone research project and taught courses in nonprofit governance and information management.

Professor Harrison has conducted three international research investigations into the role and impact of chairs of nonprofit boards of directors as well as two national research studies exploring the impact of government and nonprofit organizations on public administration. His work has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the American Society for Public Administration. His research focuses on the role of government and nonprofit organizations in the provision of public services and the impact of government and nonprofit organizations on public administration. His work has been published in a number of academic journals, including the Journal of Public Administration.

Professor Desfosses conducted a videoconference on horizontal federalism with the Institute of Ethics Journal on January 8. Professor Desfosses also presented her paper “Promoting Legislative Receptivity to Greater Public Engagement: Concerns and Incentives” at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in San Diego. She also presented her paper “Expanded HIV Screening in the United States: Finance, Policy, and Ethics” at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Boston this past June. The workshop was hosted by Professor Martin and was attended by approximately 50 participants. The workshop focused on the role of government and nonprofit organizations in the provision of public services and the impact of government and nonprofit organizations on public administration.

Professor Nakamura participated in the 10th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in San Diego. She presented her paper “The More They Work, the More They Drink: The Impact of Alcohol on Criminal Justice” at the Political Methodology Section meeting. She also presented her paper “The Impact of Alcohol on Criminal Justice” at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Boston this past June. The workshop was hosted by Professor Martin and was attended by approximately 50 participants. The workshop focused on the role of government and nonprofit organizations in the provision of public services and the impact of government and nonprofit organizations on public administration.

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Research Center News

Rockefeller College’s research centers, institutes, and partners conduct state-of-the-art research and policy analysis, improve the knowledge and skills of employees in public and nonprofit agencies through professional development, and work with government at all levels in the United States and abroad to enhance their ability to govern effectively.

SUNY Center for International Development (SUNY/CID)

The SUNY Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) recently launched a major project on constituency development funds (CDFs) by offering a series of workshops on the topic for academics and international practitioners. In July, Research Professor Mark Bakin traveled to the UK to present a paper on CDFs at the Ninth Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians. This past September, SUNY/CID organized a roundtable on CDFs at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. Also in September, a 56th Annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Nairobi, Kenya, Professor Bakin led a workshop on the role of parliamentarians in facilitating grassroots projects.

In the aftermath of the January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, SUNY/CID’s project team deployed courage and resourcefulness in assisting in the rescue efforts and supporting the nation’s subsequent efforts to rebuild. Since 2000, CID has been working in Haiti to provide technical assistance to Parliament in order to develop the skills and capacity of its members and staff and to strengthen the broader community. The CID team supported several crucial activities aimed at helping the Parliament connect with citizens in the wake of the earthquake.

Haiti’s Parliament (below and to the right) shows the devastating effects of the January 12, 2010 earthquake.

Center for Women in Government & Civil Society (CWCGS)
The Center for Women in Government & Civil Society (CWCGS) launched its newest initiative, the Women’s Leadership Academy (WLA), on November 30, 2010 with State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher as host. WLA programming includes the fellowship on Women & Public Policy, an intensive, semester-long leadership development program for graduate and postgraduate level students pursuing careers in public policy, and NEW™ Leadership New York, a week-long undergraduate leadership development program designed to encourage women to run for elected office.

Professional Development Program (PDP)

A number of projects developed by the Professional Development Program (PDP) were honored with awards this year. “The Tobacco Recovery Resource and Enhance Learning Hub” and “Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome,” an e-learning course, received APEX Awards of Excellence for Education and Training in the Electronic and Video Publications category. PDP also received a bronze award for a suite of online modules created for the Tobacco Interactions Project, in the category of best practice in distance learning programming from the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA).

The Project on Violent Conflict (PVC)

In partnership with the University of Arizona and the Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), the Project on Violent Conflict (PVC) has been awarded a grant from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). The grant is titled “New Analytic Methods for the Exploration of Open-Source Structured Databases to Enhance Situational Awareness for Effective Counter-WMD Strategies.” Last January, PVC team traveled to the International Center for the Study of Terrorism (ICST) at Beirut, Lebanon, for continued work on “Bomb to Bombmaker,” a study of the Provisional Irish Republican Army’s use of and innovations in improvised explosive devices. In summer, the PVC staff presented their article “Terror Combinations: Studying the Structure of Terrorist Networks” at the First International Conference on Cross-Cultural Decision Making in Miami.

SUNY Center for Legislative Development (SUNY/CLD)

Under the Municipal Assistance Program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), SUNY/CLD in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, held a workshop on July 5, 2010 at Montparnasse Hotel in the Rabieh area of Beirut focusing on the provision of USAID assistance to newly established municipalities.

Intergovernmental Studies Program (IGSP)

Rockefeller College Assistant Dean and IGSP Director Sydney G. Cresswell has been named to Governor Andrew Cuomo’s transition team. Cresswell will serve on the State and Local Government Reform Committee.

Center for Technology in Government (CTG), a partner of Rockefeller College

CTG Director Theresa Pardo was invited to participate in The IBM Center for the Business of Government Forum to examine the Obama Administration’s themes for a high performing government research agenda. The forum presented an opportunity for CTG to share its 15 years of expertise in advancing research and practice on the interaction of policy, management, and technology use at all levels of government. CTG researchers and officials from the NYS Office of the Chief Information Officer have also been working with local, state, and federal agencies to help agencies understand and navigate the political, policy, and management dimensions of increasing government openness in the digital age. Recently, CTG began a collaboration with the NYS Office of Cyber Security (OCS) to develop a comprehensive map of broadband Internet availability throughout New York State.

For more information on the activities of Rockefeller College’s research centers and partners, visit us online at www.albany.edu/rockefeller.

NYS Executive Honored by Rockefeller College

Executive Deputy Comptroller Mark P. Patison of the Office of State and Local Government Accountability was honored by the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy during its 20th Annual John E. B. Stetson Award Ceremony on Tuesday, April 20, 2010.

The event, hosted by University at Albany President George M. Philip, honors individuals who have dedicated their careers to serving the people of New York. Lieutenant Governor Richard Ravitch recognized Patison during the ceremony by the University for his outstanding accomplishments, delivered the keynote address.

Describing Mark Patison’s service to his community as “truly extensive,” Dean Jeffrey D. Straussman presented the deputy comptroller with the distinguished service award medal on behalf of the College. Patison’s son, former U.S. Representative Edward “Ted” Patison, Jr., recognized during the ceremony by the University, for his outstanding accomplishments, delivered the keynote address.

Mark Patison was appointed Executive Deputy Comptroller for the Office of State and Local Government Accountability on May 7, 2007. He previously served as the Deputy Comptroller for Local Government Services and Economic Development, and as Mayor of Troy, from 1996 through 2003. He worked at the Rensselaer County Chamber of the Association for Retarded Citizens for 20 years, including 12 years as its director, and served as a vice-president of the City of Troy’s school board, president of Vanderhoof Hall, vice-chair of the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce, chairperson of the Hudson Mohawk Heritage Area Commission, and president of the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies. Mark Patison was a trustee and faculty member of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and has served on several community boards, including the Center for Economic Growth and the Commission for Economic Opportunity.

The Burton Lecture is named for John E. Burton, who served as New York’s budget director under Governor Thomas E. Dewey from 1943 to 1950. Burton, who was credited with modernizing the state’s budget process, was a key member of the special committee that recommended the creation of the State University of New York System.

Executive Deputy Comptroller Mark P. Patison of the Office of State and Local Government Accountability accepts his award from Rockefeller College during the 26th Annual John E. Burton Lecture & Distinguished Public Service Awards Ceremony at Page Hall on Tuesday, April 20, 2010.
Student News

Rockefeller MPAs Named Presidential Management Fellows

Two members of the Class of 2010 have been named Presidential Management Fellows by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). After receiving their MPAs, Mike Murray, an MPA student specializing in homeland security, and Kate Gargiulo, intern at the NYS Assembly working for the Office of the Speaker, both accepted the prestigious title of Presidential Management Fellow and began their careers in public administration.

The highly competitive Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) Program provides paid fellowships to outstanding recent graduates who have demonstrated excellence in their academic field and a strong commitment to public service. Participants are nominated by their schools and undergo a rigorous assessment process. Upon successful completion of their two-year fellowships, Brick and Asker, both public finance specialists, will be appointed to permanent positions within the federal government.

Both Murray and Gargiulo are active in the Rockefeller College MPA program, which has been particularly influential in helping them gain this valuable experience. Murray, for example, has been involved in a variety of internships and research projects, including a recent overseas internship in New York State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NYSVOAD) at the NYS Emergency Management Office. Gargiulo has presented three papers at conferences: "Checking Election Outcome Accuracy: Post-Election Audit Procedures" and "The Interplay of Constituent Saving Opportunities in New York State" at a poster session at the American Society for Public Administration's (ASPA) Annual Conference in 2010.

In January 2010, doctoral student Lauren Murray presented a paper titled "Whither Digital Government Research in the 21st Century?" at the International Digital Government Research Conference on System Sciences (HICSS) in Hawaii. Murray has been actively involved in the Rockefeller College MPA program, and has presented research on topics such as intelligence analysis and homeland security.

With the receipt of the Presidential Management Fellowship, Murray and Gargiulo join a distinguished group of Rockefeller College graduates who have been named PMFs in recent years. The fellowship offers a unique opportunity to work for a wide range of federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Building a Better Intelligence Analyst

Michael L. Murray, author of "A Better Intelligence Analyst," hopes the work he’s doing will make the world a little more secure.

"There has been much study on intelligence analysis and what we need new approaches," Murray noted in his book, which was recently published by Cambridge University Press. Murray has been involved in research on the role of intelligence analysis in the Cold War, and has been a consultant to the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense.

Murray has also been involved in intelligence analysis training and education, working with organizations such as the National Intelligence University and the Office of Naval Intelligence. He has been a guest lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, and has presented papers at conferences on intelligence analysis and homeland security.

Murray is currently working on a new book, "Intelligence Analysis in the 21st Century," which will be published in 2011. He is also working on a project to develop a new curriculum for intelligence analysis training, which will be offered in the fall of 2012.
An Alumna Shares Career Lessons

If you ever doubted that a graduate program can launch a career and make you astute about professional achievement, just ask Martha Hia, a federal employee in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and a Rockefeller alumna. Martha, a federal employee in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and a Rockefeller alumna, learned valuable lessons about the skills, experiences, and choices that keep a career in motion.

According to Martha, her success began with her coursework at Rockefeller College and continued with her fellowship with the New York State Division of the Budget (DOB). The master’s program coursework got her into DOE and bought her critical thinking skills, and the higher education position at the DOE gave her recent graduates with the experience necessary to be successful.

Martha’s role as a district director in the Department of Education (DOE) was a critical component of her trajectory. Along the way, Martha learned valuable lessons about the demands of the job, the importance of networking, and the role of continuous learning.

Martha observed, considers New York a cutting-edge state, and “federal officials find it invaluable to hire individuals with state experience precisely because it is so difficult to know the impact of policy and implementation decision on states.”

In his third year as a manager in the Health Care Delivery Administration (HCDA), has been working on developing proactive policies and strategies for health care reform.

Though it may seem that having reached her current position Martha has achieved all of her career goals, this is not the case. Martha has an ongoing agenda which, providentially, includes a role as an advisor to Rockefeller College, ensuring that generations of students will benefit from her wisdom and experience.

Michael A. Rinella, PhD, 1997The author of Rockwell's Alumnae News & Notes is putting a call to action for your peers to get involved in alumni affairs. The end result is a more vibrant and engaged alumni base.

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Now there’s a convenient way to update your contact info and share your news with fellow alums. Rockefeller College’s Office of Career & Alumni Programs invites you to take advantage of a new online form that makes staying in touch quick and easy. Have a new job? Recently been promoted? Maybe you’ve just received an award or published an article or book. Weddings, babies, new address, interesting travels? We’d love to hear what you’re up to.

At Rockefeller, we’re very proud of our alumni and rely on them to help make our special events and programming meaningful for students. “It’s important for alumni to stay involved with the College as mentors or volunteers, as it provides a legacy for current and prospective students,” explains Jennifer Williams, director of internships and career programs. The College needs alums to participate as guest speakers at career workshops and networking events; share news about job or internship opportunities; and serve as the point of contact for students interested in learning more about careers in public affairs through an informational interview. Our new online form makes it easy to choose the volunteer or mentoring opportunity that’s right for you.

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