



# SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ★ WASHINGTON, D.C.

FALL 2006

## update



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A new AU



### MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

“Tell me how I can best help the school.”

These are magic words to a dean’s ears and ones that two dedicated alumni recently spoke.

**Susan Spagna** (BA/SPA’72) and **Jonathan Helfat** (BA/SPA’68) are the kinds of graduates that make us proud. Both Jon and Susan have brought distinction to SPA through their professional accomplishments (Susan as the vice president of HR and general counsel for the jeweler David Yurman, and Jon as a partner with the law firm, Otterbourg, Steindler, Houston & Rosen, P.C.), and they have returned as investors in the school’s future.

Both Jon and Susan are addressing the need of a top university to provide faculty with support and recognition for their work. Faculty awards keep the best scholars committed; they, in turn, attract the best students. This is a virtuous circle.

The Helfat Faculty Development Endowment will recognize deserving tenured faculty who have achieved a high level of scholarship and demonstrated consistent excellence in teaching as recognized by peers and students. The first recipient of this award is Director of SPA’s Women & Politics Institute Dr. **Karen O’Connor**. Karen will hold the SPA title of Jonathan N. Helfat Distinguished Professor of Political Science. The Spagna Faculty Research Award, will give junior faculty the means to pursue research. This award will be made annually, making a real difference in what our junior faculty can achieve and what they can publish to advance the field.

These donor-funded faculty awards join SPA’s 30 donor-funded scholarships for students. The students carry the distinction of having been an SPA Carmen Group Scholar a Bernard Ross Scholar, or one of many others, throughout their studies and their professional lives. Most importantly, these lasting gifts enable dedicated students to pursue their studies, and that in turn helps them make their mark upon the world. The circle is made complete when students exhibit their commitment to philanthropy, as Jon Helfat and Susan Spagna have now done.

Best wishes,  
*William M. LeoGrande*  
William M. LeoGrande

## How to Measure Democracy in Mexico

Someone on 2006 Mexican presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s team forgot to update his post-election playbook. López Obrador, the losing candidate, protested all summer to condemn the referees of the election he lost by a razor-thin margin on July 2. His fiery rhetoric was decidedly twentieth century. The candidate seemed nostalgic for Mexico’s pre-democratic days when street demonstrations and “sit-downs” forced concessions from authoritarian rulers. To my view, López Obrador failed to recognize his nation’s dramatic move toward democracy since the turn of the new century. Felipe Calderón was declared president-

elect Calderón’s right-leaning National Action Party lost on election day, they scrambled to get back at the bargaining table afterwards. Determined to win rigged contests (but avoid having the opposing parties drop out and expose their shams), the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), which governed Mexico solo from 1929 until 2000, gave “consolation prizes” to gracious losers. Opposing parties in the 1980s and 1990s were handed city council seats, “interim” mayorships, and even a governorship or two, in exchange for post-electoral cooperation.

These opposing parties justified negotiating the electorate’s will—



**Todd Eisenstadt** (inset) analyzed this summer’s Mexican presidential elections based on his research on post-electoral “bargaining tables” common in Mexican local elections in the 1990’s. This summer’s election results were protested by losing candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (right, in an earlier election).



### Scholar’s Notebook

Todd A. Eisenstadt, Assistant Professor of Government, SPA

elect by the electoral court on September 5, but López Obrador has yet to concede.

Since 1996, Mexico’s electoral court, one object of López Obrador’s scorn, has been the constitutionally mandated last stop for post-electoral disputes. Having spent nearly a decade studying this court, I knew that the candidate’s sweeping anti-tribunal accusations were unfounded. All those months in the archive room coding cases led me to spend this summer vouching to the media for the court’s record of even-handed rulings.

Through my research, I knew that before this court, elections were a tug of war, not a one-day event. Whatever López Obrador’s left-leaning Party of the Democratic Revolution and presi-

where they thought they had won and beyond—to retain platforms for promoting change. The PRI rewarded one party but often repressed another. (More than 150 activists from the PRD, López Obrador’s party, were killed between 1989 and 2003.) To me, democratization could be partially understood as the interaction between two trends: increasing opposition party compliance with electoral courts and the concurrent reduction in post-electoral conflicts by losers. Dedicated Mexico-based USAID officer Jene Thomas considered “loser compliance” and dispute adjudication as novel measures of electoral cleanliness.

López Obrador notwithstanding, post-electoral conflicts subsided quickly after the late 1990s

everywhere but in the poor and heavily indigenous state of Oaxaca. The customary practice for selecting mayors, *usos y costumbres*, legalized in this southern state in 1995, was one explanation for continued conflicts there.

In 2000, before the election of

Mexico’s first post-WWII opposition president, USAID asked me to direct several Mexican universities and nongovernmental partners to observe national and regional elections and further research post-electoral courts and conflicts.

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## SPA HAPPENINGS

**OCT 20 Alumni Authors Reception**

Dr. **Julie A. Dolan** (PhD/SPA'97) and Dr. **Melissa M. Deckman-Fallon** (PhD/SPA'99, MA/SPA'97) discuss the publishing experience with PhD students and alumni.

5:30-7 p.m. • Mary Graydon 203/205

**OCT 21 Meet the Dean**

A breakfast reception provides an opportunity for alumni and students and their families to meet Dean **William M. LeoGrande**.

10-11 a.m. • Mary Graydon 245

**OCT 23 AU/NTL O D Network Conference**

Program founders **Edie Seashore** and **Morley Segal** host AU/NTL students and alumni.

6-7 p.m. • San Francisco

**OCT 24 2006 Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership**

U.S. Comptroller General **David M. Walker** honors awardees—David M. Altwegg, Deputy for Agency Operations, Missile Defense Agency, Department of

Defense; and William H. Gimson, Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Abramson Recital Hall, 7-9 p.m. • Katzen Arts Center

**Key Alumni Gathering and Reception**

**OCT 27** An update on federal legal issues by DPAP Distinguished Professor

**David Rosenbloom** and the introduction of this year's Donald G. Zauderer Key Executive Scholarship winner is followed by a reception.

5-7:30 p.m. • Carnegie Conference Center

**NOV 15 SPA Career Networking Event**

7-8:30 p.m. • Mary Graydon

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

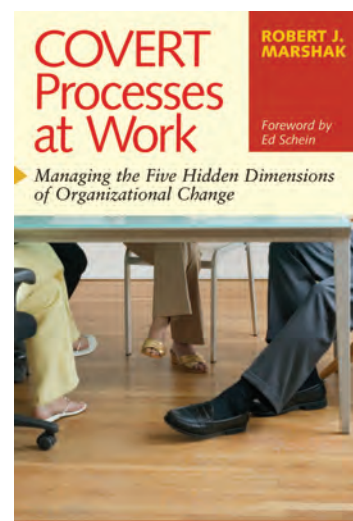
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http://spa.american.edu/alumni

# Undercover Work: Organizational Hidden Forces



A colleague from Oxford calls **Robert J. Marshak** a “grandmaster of OD.” Marshak (MPA/SPA'73, PhD/SPA'77) demurs but admits he occupies a unique niche in the growing field of organizational development. The scholar-in-residence at SPA's AU/NTL program is both an accomplished practitioner as well as a renowned academic. Marshak is the recipient of his field's Oscar—the Organization Development Network's Lifetime Achievement Award—and a busy consultant with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and nonprofits. His first book, *Covert Processes at Work: Managing the Five Hidden Dimensions of Organizational Change* (Berrett-Koehler, 2006), addresses the concealed forces at play in offices around the world.

**Q** How did you become interested in this topic?

**A** As a boy I was interested in the secrets of magic: misdirection, slight-of-hand, gimmicks, and ruses. I was also interested in how the carnival games were rigged to make it look like you had a fair chance when in actuality you had no chance. I think the proper answer is that I have always been curious about what is really going on versus what is purportedly happening. Professionally, it struck me from my first job on that what people said to each other wasn't very often what was really going on. Or that there was something that was not being discussed that had much more impact on what was happening, or not happening, than what was being talked about. And, I suppose having been inducted into the Army during the Vietnam War and serving as a military intelligence special agent may have also had some influence, at least in terminology.

What are some of the most recognizable covert processes?

Typically people immediately think of secret deals, under-the-table arrangements, misleading or false statements. If, however, we expand our thinking about “covert” to mean anything that is hidden or concealed or out of our awareness, then there are many more things that are covert in organizations that can block our efforts. These include blind spots and conceptual blocks, the workings of our unconscious, tacit cultural beliefs, unexamined assumptions, as well as actions taken to protect oneself against anything considered too risky or dangerous psychologically, emotionally, or physically.



Are covert processes always a bad thing?

The typical reaction is that they are bad, but that is also related to the typical way they are thought about as secret, undercover dealings. Early meanings of the word “covert” included to be protected or sheltered, coming from the root “to cover.” So, in organizations there are lots of covert processes that people and teams employ to protect themselves against perceived threats. Then, of course, there are also covert processes associated with unconscious or out-of-awareness factors.

So, I would prefer to say that covert processes simply are. Some things will not be routinely out in the open, and sometimes that is a good thing. What is important is that things that are critical to the success of an individual, team, or organization need to be openly available and engaged.

How about organizational politics?

When I first started working on covert processes I did not include organizational politics in my thinking. To me organizational politics were just the way things are, and they were, to me, clearly out in the open in all the organizations I worked in. I discovered that most people did not see things the same way I did. Time after time one of the first covert processes people would mention is “organizational politics.” Often what they meant was that organizational politics were going on, and they shouldn't be. The combination of something going on that shouldn't be and an unwillingness to engage in political thinking in organizations somehow made politics something covert for many people. To me, most politics are pretty overt in organizations; we just talk about them like they shouldn't be happening.

What are a few tools for people dealing with covert processes that may be having an effect on change in their organization?

I think it is an orientation more than anything else. First, you have to start with a more neutral orientation toward things that are hidden or covert. They are not always something to be caught and exposed. A stance of curiosity mixed with a healthy dose of respect for the fact that one of the primary reasons things may be covert is that the person or group doesn't think it is safe enough to be open and forthright will go a long way. Working to create a safe, sincere, and trusting work environment is also helpful. Picking up on unspoken assumptions that are keeping things the way they are and then addressing them in an open and exploratory manner is also useful. But, creating psychological safety is the prime directive for covert processes at work. How can I help make this situation safe enough—not perfectly safe, but safe enough—for this person, team, work unit, or organization to set aside defensive or evasive behaviors and seriously engage new and possibly riskier possibilities?★

**AU/NTL**, SPA's nationally prominent program for the education of organization development practitioners and organizational leaders, offers the M.S. in Organization Development (MSOD) degree through once-monthly weekend classes offered to mid-career professionals from across the nation. For more information call 202.885.6206 or email [auntl@american.edu](mailto:auntl@american.edu).

## BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

## BOOKS

■ *Public Program*

*Evaluation: A Statistical Guide* (M.E. Sharpe, 2006), by DPAP Professor **Laura Langbein**, equips students and practitioners with the statistical skills needed to meet government standards in public program



evaluation. Even those with little statistical training will find the explanations clear, with many examples, case studies, and applications.

The book begins with chapters on the overall context for successful program evaluations, and explains statistical methods and threats to validity. Langbein and coauthor Claire Felbinger present a variety of meth-

ods for program analysis and advise readers on how to select the mix of methods most appropriate for the issues they deal with—always balancing methodology with the need for generality, the size of the evaluator's budget, the availability of data, and the need for quick results.

## MEDIA

■ **Curtis Gans**, director of SPA's Center for the Study of the American Electorate, was a guest on WAMU's *Kojo Namdi Show*. Gans discussed voter participation and a ballot proposal in Arizona that would add a \$1 million lottery component to voting. Gans also spoke to the *New York Times* and *USA Today* about the proposal.



## ALUMNI OF NOTE

Moving fast is **Paul Domorski's** (MPA/SPA'78, BA/SPA'76) defining characteristic. As the CEO of a manufacturer of commercial and military wireless products and services, Domorski must change course in short order to keep up with this rapidly changing field.

Speed was also evident when Domorski was a student at SPA. He moved quickly through his studies, beginning as a 16-year-old freshman, and ultimately becoming one of AU's youngest graduates ever at age 19. Domorski recalls AU as a place that was hospitable for one so young. "It was a good time and the perfect place for me to get started. It was my first time away from home."

The New Jersey native relished his time at AU. "I enjoyed the professors and the opportunity to talk to leaders who would visit the classroom," he says. "I enjoyed the whole experience."

Plowing through SPA's government department offerings, Domorski usually undertook a course load of 20-plus credits. He also went on to earn his MPA from SPA at the age of 21.

"Plus there was always something going on." Domorski held a spate of part-time jobs, including handing out basketballs at the old Cassell gym to maximize time on his beloved courts, before gravitating to internships at various government agencies. One of Domorski's internships was at the Interstate Commerce Commission where he was assigned as a financial analyst representing the government in a different kind of court, a court of law.

Named president and CEO of EMS Technologies earlier this year, Domorski puts his considerable energy and focus to work in leading this Atlanta-based company of more than 1,200 employees and revenues of \$300+ million. His reward is watching new products play a role in crucial world situations. His company has helped developed sophisticated antennas for the Defense Department, as well as ruggedized products for use in factories and hotspots around the world. New areas of focus for EMS Technologies include products used in logistical environments, as well as aeronautical broadband products. Although he is not an engineer, Domorski relies on a cadre of experts. "I'm not a rocket scientist, but there are more than 80 in the building where I work!"

Formerly vice president of other hi-tech endeavors, Domorski's work has taken him from Washington to Silicon Valley with many stops in between, including London where he spent 10 years as president of a British



Telecom division. He began his career at Unisys Corporation and its predecessor companies Burroughs and Memorex and held progressively more responsible executive and financial roles there.

Atlanta provides a new base for Domorski, his wife, and three children—two of whom are in college—as well as new teams, the Hawks and the Falcons, to pull for. "I root for whoever is around." ★

### SPA's CEOs

Over 100 SPA alumni hold the title of president or CEO. Here are a few:

**Kimball Brace**, President, Election Data Services (BA/SPA'74) ★ **John Boyer**, President, MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. (PHD/SPA'89) ★ **Gregory Fazakerley**, Chairman and CEO, CG Investments (BA/SPA'71) ★ **Barbara Ferris**, President, International Women's Democracy Center (MPA/SPA'85) ★ **Brian Keane**, President, Smartpower (BA/SPA'89) ★ **David Gladstone**, Chairman and CEO, Gladstone Investments (MA/SPA'69) ★ **Jeanne Murray**, President, Sequoia Associates (PHD/SPA'80) ★ **Josephine Rick**, President, The Sloane Group (MSOD/SPA'99) ★ **Janet Reingold**, President, J.R. Reingold & Associates, Inc. (MPA/SPA'82) ★ **Vincent Sedmak**, Chairman and CEO, World Voice Inc. (BS/SPA'83) ★ **Steven Spiegelman**, President, Wall Street Mortgage Corp. (BA/SPA'74)

■ JLS Professor **Emilio Viano**, was interviewed on CNN on the U.S. drug trafficking report identifying Nicaragua, Panama, and other Central American countries as new major points of distribution to the United States and Europe. Viano was also interviewed on NBC *Telemundo* about the deteriorating security situation in Iraq and on Radio Union of Venezuela on the U.S.-India accord on nuclear

energy proposed by President Bush. ■ Dean **William M. LeoGrande** appeared on NBC's *Today*, NPR, and VOA and was interviewed by the *Miami Herald* and *Forbes* magazine on the health of Fidel Castro. LeoGrande was also interviewed by *Newsweek* on the attitude of newly elected Central American governments that do not see Cuba as an adversary.

## SPA HONORS

### SPA Professors Awarded Princeton Fellowships

JLS Professor **Daniel Dreisbach** and Government Associate Professor **Alan Levine** have been awarded prestigious fellowships from Princeton University's Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions for the 2006-07 academic year. Only six such fellowships, which promote teaching and scholarship in constitutional law and political thought, are given each year.

Dreisbach becomes a William E. Simon fellow in religion and public life at Princeton. Dreisbach's research interests include American constitutional law and history, church-state relations, and criminal procedure.

Levine becomes a visiting fellow in Princeton's Department of Politics. A specialist in the history of Western political theory, Levine is currently working on a book, *The Idea of America in European Political Thought: 1492-1992*.

DPAP Distinguished Professor **David Rosenbloom** and **Suzanne Piotrowski** (PhD/MPA/SPA'03) have been unanimously selected to receive the 2005 Best Article Award from the *American Review of Public Administration* for their article, "Outsourcing the Constitution and Administrative Law Norms."

Three SPA graduate students have been selected for the prestigious Bryce Harlow Scholarship awards for the 2006-2007 academic year. These awards are made to exceptional graduate students with career goals in government relations or lobbying and who demonstrate academic achievement and leadership skills. Bryce Harlow scholars attend graduate school part-time while working full-time on Capitol Hill or in government agencies, lobbying firms, or associations. The SPA recipients are MPA candidate **Sara Arnold** and MPP candidates **Elizabeth Frederick** and **Mark Yost**.

This summer, DPAP Assistant Professor **Robert Kramer** spoke on the action learning curriculum at the Századvég School of Politics in Budapest, the Thierry Graduate School of Leadership in Brussels, the European Commission in Brussels, the Brookings Institution, and the Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference in Rochester, New York.

■ **James Thurber**, director of CCPS, was interviewed about the Dubai ports controversy by AP. ■ **Robert M. Tobias**, director of SPA's Key Executive Leadership Programs, joined *Washington Post* columnist Stephen Barr for an online discussion of the challenges facing the federal workforce.

## Measuring Democracy in Mexico

continued from page 1

My new USAID project, launched with support from SPA and AU and led also by Dr. Jaime Bailón of the Benito Juárez Autonomous University in Oaxaca and Katya Salazar of the Due Process of Law Foundation, will study implementation of these election-related rules as well those governing criminal proceedings, agrarian conflicts, and other citizens/state interactions.

As Mexico moves into democracy as we recognize it, I look forward to investigating issues of formal representation and governance (secret ballot elections and city council meetings), versus informal, traditional indigenous customs and norms (like *usos y costumbres*). The challenge now for my colleagues and me will be to reconcile Western, individual rights-based views with an appreciation for diverse, more collectivist forms of governance. ★



SPA Assistant Professor of Government **Todd Eisenstadt** (pictured above working with Chiapas election observers in 2000) conducted hundreds of interviews to document Mexico's informal post-electoral "bargaining tables." These conflicts came into sharp focus this summer with Mexico's hotly contested presidential election. Author of *Courting Democracy in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and numerous articles on Mexico's democratization, Eisenstadt is a Fulbright and National Security Education Program Boren fellow. He has also been a visiting scholar at El Colegio de México in Mexico City, Harvard's David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, and other universities in the United States and abroad.

Eisenstadt directed the U.S. Agency for International Development's Mexico Elections Project between 2000 and 2005. The project consisted of academic research and training for hundreds of observers of local elections and other government processes. Starting in January 2007, Eisenstadt will direct a three-year USAID-funded research and training project in Oaxaca, one of Mexico's poorest states, with colleagues from the DC-based Due Process of Law Foundation and the Benito Juárez Autonomous University in Oaxaca.

## SPA PHILANTHROPY

For **Edgardo Diaz**, counterfeit is the real thing. The SPA senior regards a career in detection of forgery as the pot of gold. Diaz has pursued his passion as a justice major while interning with Maryland's Montgomery County Police Department and holding a full-time job in AU's Office of Human Resources.



With help from the Washington DC Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Diaz will get to his dream on an accelerated schedule. Diaz's NOBLE scholarship is matched by support from AU. Each year, DC's NOBLE chapter awards a needs-based scholarship to a Washington area student enrolled in a Department of Justice, Law, and Society degree program with preference given to an outstanding minority student. The scholarship recipient must agree to perform two years of service in the field of law enforcement upon graduation—an end that Diaz relishes.



**Giving your time is an act of philanthropy.** Alumni active in the new SPA Alumni Career Committees know this well. Members of these new committees provide career advice and information to SPA students and other graduates on specific professions and industries. This exchange takes place through events and programs planned by alumni with SPA staff. Students benefit from the expertise of alumni, and alumni benefit from interacting with colleagues in the same field. The five SPA Alumni Career Committees are based on the top professional areas for SPA graduates: legal, congressional, federal, government relations, and nonprofit. To learn more, please contact Alexandra Salama at 202-885-2660.

## "The women here are on fire."



So says **Jen Smyers** (left), in a June *New York Times* front page story about the surge of female students and the shift in proportion from men to women enrolled at universities throughout the country. AU's admissions office

decisions, the story noted, are made on a gender-blind basis. A former director of the AU Women's Initiative and a member of the SPA Leadership Program, Smyers completed her BA in Law and Society this summer. A National Finalist for the Harry S Truman Scholarship, she is author of the children's book, *Renee the Refugee*, which was circulated to members of Congress as an advocacy tool. Smyers is continuing her studies at SPA as a Master of Public Policy candidate.

## NEWSMAKERS



Senator **John Kerry** with Dean **William M. LeoGrande**. The former presidential candidate spoke in May at the Kay Spiritual Life Center, touching on issues ranging from the war in Iraq to the environment. To download a podcast of the speech, visit [spa.american.edu](http://spa.american.edu)



**James Thurber** (below left), director of SPA's CCPS, with Representative **Henry Waxman** (D-CA, below right), the ranking member of the House Government Reform Committee and keynote speaker at CCPS's September conference on Congressional oversight. Other participants included **Walter Oleszek**, senior specialist of the Congressional Research Service; **David Walker**, comptroller general of the U.S.; **Eleanor Hill**, former inspector general, Department of Defense, and partner at King & Spalding; and **Clark Kent Ervin**, director of the Homeland Security Initiative at the Aspen Institute. To read a conference transcript visit <http://spa.american.edu/ccps>



**Do you want to help guarantee SPA's standing as a top public affairs program? For more information on planned giving, contact Jenine Rabin (202-885-3968, [rabin@american.edu](mailto:rabin@american.edu)) or Seth Speyer (202-885-5914, [speyer@american.edu](mailto:speyer@american.edu)).**

**NEW TO SPA:** **Alexandra Salama** (below left), BA/SOC'05, is SPA's new coordinator of development and alumni relations. Formerly a state director for the Universal Dance Association, Alexandra oversees SPA's new Alumni Career Committees and the school's donor-funded scholarships. **Heather Buckner** (below right), a 2006 graduate of Luther College (IA), joins SPA as an events specialist. Heather will coordinate more than 30 SPA alumni events in Washington and across the country in the coming year.



## QUESTION MARK DID YOU KNOW

In 2005, AU faculty members served on 143 editorial boards and 36 juries or award selection committees. AU faculty also authored

- ★ 78 books, monographs, and government reports
- ★ 116 book chapters and refereed conference proceedings
- ★ 135 refereed journal articles
- ★ 20 poems, stories, plays, and exhibitions

AU's OnLine community now offers social networking capacity through inCircle, which allows alumni to leverage AU connections to find jobs, housing, business associates, and new friends for shared interests and activities. Update your secure profile at <https://incircle.alumni.american.edu>

## FALL 2006 update

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**On the cover:** A detail of the sculpture by Daniel Chester French, the focus of the Lincoln Memorial. (GETTY IMAGES)  
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Editor: Jacqueline Corbett. Some material has been adapted from the *American Weekly*. Photos courtesy of Todd Eisenstadt, EMS, Patrick King, Jeff Watts/American University, Hilary Schwab Schapiro

Correction: Larry Muenz (BA/SPA'73) was incorrectly identified in the Spring 2006 Update as Larry Meritz.