

Carnegie Mellon University
Heinz College
ICMA Student Chapter final report

Fall Semester

In the fall semester, we hosted Mark Mansfield, the Assistant Manager from Upper St. Clair and professional advisor to the chapter, a well-run local municipality to speak about the career path to becoming a municipal manager as well as to explain the day-to-day activities of a manager.

We also hosted Ronald Grutza, the Regulatory Affairs Coordinator from the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs. He discussed municipal pensions and his report on reform measures that can be enacted to ensure long-term fiscal health for municipalities across Pennsylvania.

Lastly, four members attended the annual ICMA conference in Seattle in September. It was a great learning experience for all who attended and provided exposure to the workings of government and professional management.

Spring Semester

The spring semester brought a change in leadership as our chapter president graduated. The new chapter president and vice president set as a priority to increase student awareness of the club and to increase active membership. We did this by speaking individually to other students who were known to be interested in government and by specifically inviting them to events.

We held several events which were well attended and received with interest. The first was a talk by Susan Hockenberry, Executive Director of the Local Government Academy. She gave an animated talk about the history of the Allegheny County's 130 municipalities and gave an overview of the different classifications of the municipalities. Put into an historical context, it is much easier to understand how and why we have so many municipalities in the Pittsburgh area. Members have asked for an encore presentation.

A second event that was held was co-sponsored with the public policy program. Secretary Curt Topper, a Heinz College alum, was asked to speak about his role as Secretary of General Services for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. His talk appealed to many students, particularly those who are data-driven as a portion of his talk was about how to simultaneously increase financial efficiencies while also increasing performance metrics by making common sense changes.

Third, we invited Heinz College alum and second professional advisor to the chapter, Ian McMeans, to speak about his experiences managing the small municipality of Homestead. This talk was open exclusively to club members to allow a greater level of communication. Mr. McMeans was able to provide recommendations for coursework while at Heinz and shared insights into the world of local government.

Another event that many chapter members attended but that was organized by the Finance Club was a talk by Rea Price, Assistant Director of the Office of Management and Budget for the City of Pittsburgh, on the city's budget process. While not organized by ICMA, it directly benefited the club.

Lastly, Heinz College hosted the Local Government Academy's Internship Fair, which drew graduates students as well as undergraduates from Heinz College, the University of Pittsburgh and other local colleges and universities. This was co-organized by Heinz College's Career Services and the LGA. One of our club sponsors and career counselors, Anita Nichols, was instrumental in making the day a success.

Looking Ahead to 2016-2017

We are already planning for and inviting speakers for the fall semester. Our goal is to host four events per semester and to focus on making the events geared for those who are interested in careers in local government with a focus on the Pittsburgh region. For example, some of the topics that we wish to explore will be storm water runoff and local issues in sustainability. We also want to include some more "nuts and bolts" style events such as having speakers address how the budgeting process occurs and how it can be used as a strategic tool.