

SPC-ICMA ANNUAL REPORT

The 2015-16 academic year has been a successful learning and networking experience for our St. Petersburg College – ICMA student chapter. Our members have had several opportunities to meet and interact with local leaders. We had two highly respected local government guest speakers over this past year who talked candidly with our chapter members about the diverse aspects of government service and how they achieved their current positions.

Our first guest speaker was Clearwater City Manager Mr. Bill Horne who is currently the longest serving City Manager in Clearwater, Florida with 13 years of service in that position. He spoke to our students about his distinguished career as a public servant as well as the duties and responsibilities associated with a career in public service. He stressed the importance of holding ourselves to a higher ethical standard because we as future public services professionals owe it to the public and to ourselves. Mr. Horne also reminded us that it takes a “thick skin” to serve as a government official.

Our next guest speaker was City of Clearwater Mayor, Mr. George Cretekos. He spoke about his 40+ years in public service beginning with his first public position in 1971 as a legislative aid for United States Representative C. W. Bill Young. Following his retirement from national government and his service as a missionary in 2006, he ran unopposed for Mayor of Clearwater in 2008 and was subsequently re-elected in 2012. He spoke about how the speed of communications in government has changed significantly with the advent of the internet and e-mail. He also remarked that the only way to balance the budget in U. S. Congress is to either raise taxes or cut programs. He stressed to us that the purpose of public service is to serve others—it should not be about the title, position, money, or power. He left us with a quote from

Shakespeare's Hamlet—which he aspires every day to live by: “To thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Another outstanding opportunity we had this year, for which we are very grateful, was an invitation to the Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA) Leadership Institute in Orlando, Florida! The main theme of the conference focused on preparing the next generation for service in government. We attended multiple educational sessions that will be very helpful to all incoming chapter members once we share what we have learned with them. In addition, we will share the lessons we have learned with all students in our Public Policy and Administration baccalaureate degree program so they understand the importance of public service and the need for trained professionals in this career field.

Our chapter is excited about and looking forward to another great year of learning and professional development/networking opportunities!