

## **ICMA University of Central Florida Chapter: Networking Knight**

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) student chapter at the University Of Central Florida (UCF) hosted many outstanding events. Chartered in 2013, our chapter has over 50 students passionate about local government. This school year we are seeking to attend the national ICMA conference in San Antonio, Texas. Our chapter hosted a Networking Knight in February 2017. We created this title as best fitting and representing our university mascot the UCF Knight or as we call him “Knightro”. We decided to invite professionals of local government and public administration to network with the students and share their knowledge about the field. As professionals currently working in local government and public administration, this was an opportunity to interact and network with students from UCF who have aspirations to work in the field. Additionally, they had the opportunity to share their story as to how they obtained their position and encourage future leaders of today’s society.

This was the most unique chapter event of the year because we were able to offer our members a chance to learn networking skills. Students were also able to hear the stories of the local government officials and learn about the many opportunities that exist within the public sector. These students were able to take full advantage of the Networking Knight event and understand that these opportunities could lead to a job position or internship in the near future. One of the attendees at the event was Keyera Lyn, a student interested in local government. She shared her experience about the event with chapter officers. Ms. Lyn stated “Attending Networking Knight was an incredibly rewarding experience. I realized the importance of establishing meaningful connections prior to graduation and entering a career in the public sector.” Connections are the key to career success as this is one of the various positive statements

shared by student chapter members. Following the Networking Knight, we all took a moment to offer feedback. Many of the members stated that this event has helped shape their future. As a chapter we have a strong passion for the public sector, enhancing our leadership skills, and we believe professional development is vital to personal success.

Various local government employees from around the Central Florida area were in attendance for the evening. Some of the professionals included, Jonathan Evans from City of Rivera Beach, Florida and graduate of the UCF School of Public Administration, Michelle Jones of Brevard County, Florida and Shantavia Connor of Haines City, Florida. These professionals had the opportunity to interact with current ICMA student members who are passionate about a career in the public sector. One student, Tai-Lyn Parboosingh was able to obtain a full-time position with Haines City upon graduation. Without a doubt, students were fully engaged with the professionals at the event.

The goal is for all members of the UCF ICMA Student Chapter to be confident public officials and administrators who will change the public sector in Florida for the better while keeping the community at the center of their decisions. As a Student chapter, we will continue to generate creativity within one another and continue the legacy of past leaders with our organization. Passion for the public sector is something that the professionals invited and our student chapter members share. This Networking Knight was a success because of our passion, willingness to succeed, and overall determine to foster growth. Henry David Thoreau says “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined”. Due to the success of this event, the ICMA Student Chapter at UCF desires to attend the national conference in San Antonio, Texas and hope to see you there. Attached please find a group photo our event.

