

ASPA AND TEXAS CPM: A Strategic Partnership

By Howard Balanoff

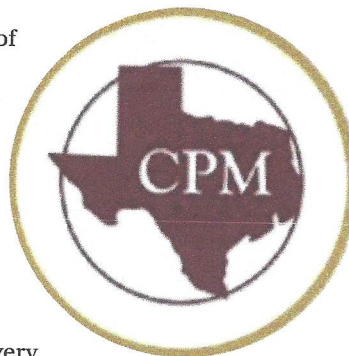
In 2020, ASPA and the Texas Certified Public Manager Degree Programs (TCPM) entered into a historic partnership to provide complimentary student memberships, discounted alumni memberships and a range of professional development and e-learning content for hundreds of public managers across the state of Texas. The partnership created a “win-win” environment for both ASPA and TCPM—bringing hundreds of practitioners into the ASPA community, providing them membership in ASPA, their local Chapter and the Section on Public Management Practice (SPMP). Now in its third year, the ASPA-TCPM partnership continues to generate tangible and long-term positive results.

For degree programs like TCPM, comprised primarily of early- and mid-career practitioners who find themselves returning to school to hone their skills, ASPA membership helps round out the professional development resources provided by their eight respective schools across the state of Texas and affords them the opportunity to connect with a broader—national and international—public administration community.

Three central components have characterized TCPM’s institutional membership: (1) networking opportunities for the students (2) curriculum content provided to students *and* teachers alike and (3) a chance to grow a new generation of practitioners across the state of Texas passionate about good government and eager to give back through mentorship and personal connections.

One key aspect of the partnership has included the opportunity for TCPM faculty and students to participate in the ASPA Annual Conference. In 2021, for example, ASPA added a virtual symposium, consisting of some of the very best faculty in the TCPM programs. An additional benefit provided to participants has been a special student rate, maximizing the opportunity for the students’ participation. TCPM attendees have been very complimentary about the quality of speakers and the number of interesting and informative sessions they were able to attend. In 2023, they participated in a day-long symposium SPMP developed; this involvement has reached beyond the confines of that singular event, as program faculty and students are playing a major role in revising *Good Governance Worldwide*, SPMP’s official journal.

Another key aspect of bringing ASPA into the TCPM programs was the value of emphasizing the importance of ASPA’s Code of Ethics. The code has been integrated into the programs’ curriculum and students have been very pleased with the discussions that have taken place around the significance and value of the code.



Yet another aspect has been the value of Bill Shields, ASPA’s executive director and CEO, and ASPA staff presenting information about ASPA directly into CPM classes. Hearing directly from ASPA representatives has been very beneficial and educational. They also have presented information to the directors of the TCPM programs at quarterly meetings.

The ASPA-Texas CPM agreement serves as a model for other statewide CPM programs in the United States. If your organization, agency, certificate or degree program is interested in learning more about ASPA’s institutional and organizational membership program, made available by a one-time annual fee, contact Lexie Tyson at ltyson@aspanet.org.

Howard Balanoff is professor of political science at Texas State University, where he has served as chair of the William P. Hobby Center for Public Service and director of the Texas Certified Public Manager Program. He has taught at Texas State University for more than 30 years and served as adjunct professor of public affairs and educational administration at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the editor of the textbook, Public Policy and Administration. Balanoff is a former member of ASPA’s National Council, former president of the National Certified Public Manager Consortium and chair of ASPA’s Section on Public Management Practice. He can be reached at hb02@txstate.edu.