

**PA Theory Network
Candidates for 2019 Board Elections**

Adam Eckerd



Adam Eckerd is an Associate Professor and MPA Co-Director with the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis. He conducts research on organizational and individual decision making in complex settings, particularly as it relates to how risk is assessed and how information is used to manage public and nonprofit programs and policies. Adam's work investigates issues of environmental policy and land use, public participation, and program evaluation.

Candidate Statement of Interest: I did not necessarily expect to be running for the board of the PA Theory Network, in part because I never really considered myself a theorist. In fact, I have only attended the PA Theory Network conference once—last year. However, I found the discussions invigorating and came to realize that not only am I a theorist, theory is the direction my scholarship has been leading me for some time. I have come to realize that PA Theory Network is my appropriate intellectual home, and I'd like to be a bigger part of it.

Candidate Statement of Qualifications: I have published work across the spectrum of public affairs journals, focusing mainly on issues of complexity as it relates to environmental policy, public participation, and evaluation. Even though I am relatively new to the PA Theory Network, I have published with multiple PA Theory Network members and was on the faculty for five years with the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech, a prominent historical PA Theory Network supporting program.

Laura Hand



I am an assistant professor at the University of North Dakota, in an interdisciplinary appointment between our MPA and MPH programs. My research focuses on the communicative processes and interpersonal dynamics of public encounters, and the implications they have for outcomes, citizen participation, and social justice. I incorporate feminist and critical perspectives in my work, such as an ethic of care and epistemic injustice, as well as analyzing long-standing concepts in the field such as coproduction and street-level bureaucrats' coping through a critical lens. I am currently working on new research that incorporates values and methods of community-based participatory research. My work can be found in *Administration & Society*, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, and *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*.

Statement of Interest/Qualifications: I have been an active member of the PA Theory Network annual conference since my first panel presentation as a Ph.D. student in 2010. I have volunteered as a moderator and discussant, was a member of the 2017 conference planning committee, and co-facilitated the graduate student workshop in 2018. I am also a member of the editorial board of Administrative Theory & Praxis. The PA Theory Network has been a place of intellectual development and friendship where I have made valuable connections, both personal and professional. As the only critical theorist in my department, the PA Theory Network has been a crucial space where I speak the common language and can be heard and understood in a way that does not exist in my day-to-day professional life.

I have a strong desire to give back to the organization that has given me so much. There are three areas where my interests and expertise would be especially relevant:

- Expanding the Network's support and mentorship for Ph.D. students and early career researchers as theory scholars
- Helping extend the reach and influence of the Network in creative ways
- Developing additional methods of interaction between members around shared interests, ideas, and expertise.

In addition, I am committed to supporting and promoting values of inclusivity, participation, and sustainability of the Network.

Nuri Heckler



I discovered my intellectual home at the PA Theory Network conference in San Antonio. I had already found that Administrative Theory and Praxis was publishing articles that spoke to my curiosity, willingness to learn from other fields and eras, and drive to question basic assumptions about government and society. The conference had all of that and a built-in culture of mentorship and collegiality. I presented alongside two of my academic heroes, one of whom later agreed to serve on my dissertation committee, and another co-presenter instantly became a co-author. I was hooked. *I*

have been back to the PA Theory Network conference every year since, published in AT&P multiple times, and served on the host committee for the 2019 conference in Denver. I believe this commitment makes me a good candidate to serve on the PA Theory Network Board.

As a lawyer and former nonprofit executive recently appointed to an assistant professorship at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, I bring experience that I can use to sustain the PA Theory Network and grow connections with the next generation of intersectional leadership. The focus of my leadership has always been sustainability and empowerment. These two come hand-in-hand. When PA Theory Network members are empowered by the Board, as I have felt over the last several years, they become invested in sustaining the organization. Working to make sure leadership is a

collaborative task is more challenging than simply doing it ourselves, but the ultimate long-term benefits are incalculable.

My research and my passions lie in understanding intersectional oppression and working for liberation. *As a board member I intend to strengthen the links between generations, races, genders, sexualities, and abilities that already make the PA Theory Network and AT&P such amazing spaces.* In line with my leadership philosophy, the best way to strengthen these links is to listen first, act consciously and decisively, then return to listening. I hope that you will consider giving me a chance to listen and act on your behalf on the PA Theory Network Board.

Hannah Lebovits



Hannah Lebovits is a PhD student at Cleveland State University's Levin School of Urban Affairs. Hannah's research interests relate to the production of social equity across organizations and spaces. Her scholarly work has been published in *Public Integrity* and the *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs* (forthcoming). Hannah is the editorial assistant for *Public Administration Quarterly's* Emerging Scholars Initiative and serves on the advisory board of the Midwest Public Affairs Conference. She is also a writer and reporter. She covers the suburban beat for *Cleveland Scene* and her work has appeared in *CityLab*, *Belt Magazine*, and *The Forward*.

Statement of Interest: I've been a member of the network for the past few years and in that time, I've grown to appreciate PAT Net as a valuable space for a diverse group of scholars to share ideas, perspectives and methodological strategies. I don't use the word *diverse* lightly. As an emerging scholar in the public administration field, I look around at my colleagues coming up with me and see new voices in the academy interested in embedding activism, critical race theory, queer theory and participatory research methods directly into their scholarly work. They are passionate educators and researchers who engage with the public and attempt to make the academy more accessible to the next generation.

It's inspiring and humbling. These are the people who are the future of academia and the future of the Network. Emerging scholars have so much to offer to the Network and this new class of leaders will be my primary focus. It would be an honor to assist these inspiring scholars as a member of the board- bringing more of these scholars into the network, amplifying these voices and strengthening necessary support systems.

Building Our Membership: As a board member, I would like to see a more targeted "base building" campaign directed towards graduate students and early career professors. When representatives of the network attending regional and local conferences, they should attend presentations and meet individually with students and assistant professors to encourage them to join the organization. PAT Net members are passionate about the organization and that passion is evident in personal conversations. As a board member, I would work hard to ensure that those conversations translate into memberships.

Amplifying Emerging Voices: Under the direction of Dr. Staci Zavattaro, ATP is increasingly becoming the go-to journal for new voices and ideas in public administration. The journal continues to push conversations in important directions, particularly in the areas of social justice/equity. As a board member, I will highlight the incredible work of the journal and encourage scholars considering new ideas to write blog posts and forum pieces for the website. This would provide additional opportunities for members, particularly those doing critical work, to share their work and receive feedback at different points of the research process.

Supporting Young Scholars: Graduate student stipends are abysmal and internal university mechanisms can prevent students and early career professionals from attending conferences, trying out new methodological practices and purchasing data. We need to support these efforts monetarily. As a current advisory board member of the Midwest Public Affairs conference, I worked with the board president to create a graduate student program that would build our current base. After getting buy-in from students and educators, we presented the program to a funder and received funds to cover the student admission fees. This is the kind of work I will do as PAT Net board member. Fundraising is no easy task, but you can't be afraid to ask.

Anthony Starke



Anthony is an Assistant Professor in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado – Denver. He conducts research exploring the intersections of citizenship, democracy, and equity. During his time in the doctoral program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Anthony specialized in PA Theory and Black Studies. Most recently, he defended his dissertation entitled, *Exploring Policy Narratives and Policy Design: An Interpretivist Analysis of Bureaucrats' Narratives, U.S. Welfare Policy Discourse, and the Social Construction of Welfare Recipients*. He served as the founding editor of ASPA's Section on Democracy and Social Justice (DSJ) newsletter, which won the 2019 Patricia Yearwood Newsletter of the Year Award. Previously, Anthony served as secretary of DSJ's Board of Directors, secretary of the Kappa Foundation of Fredericksburg, and chair of UNO's Waldo Society.

Anthony joined the PA Theory Network in 2016 and was selected as a 2017 PA Theory Network Fellow. As a member of the Network's board of directors, Anthony is excited to assist with (a) strategic planning efforts aimed at increasing student membership, (b) developing programs that encourage and mentor graduate students as they explore their intellectual diversity while extending the reach of the Network's current student programs, and (c) advocating for more inclusive theorizing via collaboration and coordination with other public administration organizations.

Shilpa Viswanath



Shilpa Viswanath is an incoming tenure-track Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. She will receive her Ph.D. from Rutgers University Newark’s School of Public Affairs and Administration in June 2019. Shilpa’s research explores public sector labor unions and collective bargaining outcomes during state takeovers in New Jersey. She is also presently studying gender responsive budgeting (or the dearth of it) in the United States. She is closely associated with ASPA’s Section for Women in Public Administration (SWPA), where she has been serving as the section secretary and social media editor since 2018. Shilpa was born and raised in India; she graduated from the London School of Economics and Political Science and worked in international development prior to her journey in American public administration.

A student member of the PA Theory Network, I first attended the conference as a doctoral fellow and the doctoral workshop conducted by Dr. Thomas Catlaw and Dr. Laura Hand was an intellectual space like no other. While most other public administration conference workshops focused on empirical findings of processes at the micro-level, at the PA Theory Network conference, scholars were questioning macro-level paradigms on epistemic injustice, structural inequality and social equity. I truly believe that the PA Theory Network is a unique space encouraging the amalgamation of varied research perspectives and thought philosophies in public administration. As a gender and equity scholar, and; an ardent advocate of theory building through qualitative research methods, legal analysis and administrative ethnography, I believe I will be a seamless ‘fit’ in a leadership position to further the mission of fostering normative and theoretical scholarship within the academic discipline of public administration. Listed below are a few constructive ideas that I would like to cultivate as a board member of PA Theory Network.

1. Publicly Engaged Normative and Theoretical Dialogues

The breadth and depth of issues explored and confronted in *Administrative Theory and Praxis* is truly striking. Yet, academic scholarship remains exclusive. As a board member of the PA Theory Network, I would like to work towards transforming this knowledge into publicly engaged scholarship. Creating an online repository of public scholarship by PA Theory Network members on issues relevant to public administration that is easily accessible and utilizable by civil society and practitioners. I believe the high-quality knowledge generated in *Administrative Theory & Praxis* should be disseminated and made available to the local community leaders and practitioners, in a non-academic manner.

2. PAT Net Mentor Matching Program

The PA Theory Network already fosters great scholarly collaborations at its annual conferences. As a member of the board, I would like to take this collaborative spirit to the entire membership and all year round. I think it would be essential to put together a mentor matching program aimed to foster the professional development of emerging scholars and graduate students interested in normative, theoretical and qualitative

public administration. Senior scholars at PA Theory Network can serve as mentors providing professional and personal guidance to new scholars in the network.

3. PAT Net Qualitative Methodology Workshop

The PA Theory Network doctoral workshops are most nurturing. Extending this idea of the pre-conference workshop to also include some intensive qualitative methodology training would be beneficiary to members looking to qualitatively explore issues of social justice and equity. Drawing from qualitative workshops such as the Odum Institute's QRSI and Syracuse Maxwell's IQMR, I would like to work towards bringing interdisciplinary methodology experts to train PAT Net members on identifying, tracing and measuring their research problems while using advanced and diverse qualitative techniques often not taught in a public administration classroom.

4. PAT Net Practitioner Outreach

I am fascinated by *Administrative Theory and Praxis's* author videos wherein the authors engage the audience briefly in their work. This kind of outreach is powerful and effective and entices the audience to read up and explore the author's work. As a board member of the PA Theory Network, I would like to extend this idea of scholarship outreach to include relevant practitioners as well. I think it would be fascinating to see academic scholars in brief dialogues with practitioners, while exploring issues of social justice and equity together. This in the true sense will allow for juxtaposing 'administrative theory' and 'praxis'. The idea of monthly practitioner – academic dialogues surrounding practical problems in public administration would be a useful tool to involve more practitioners to debate issues of equity and equality. It will also multiply the expanse of the network beyond academia.

About the Public Administration Theory Network

Formed in 1978 when a group of colleagues sought an informal venue for discussing and developing public administration theory, the PA Theory Network is one of the longest standing academic groups in public administration in the United States. The Network was established as a nonprofit, membership organization in 2011 and advances the mission of bringing together scholars, practitioners, and students interested in a critical understanding of government, governance, and administration. We do this in two primary ways.

First, we host a conference each year in late spring where scholars are offered the opportunity to discuss their work and interact with colleagues from across the globe. The 2019 conference, hosted by the University of Colorado-Denver's School of Public Affairs, will be our 32nd annual meeting. Our 2020 meeting will be held in partnership with Malmö University, Lund University, Gothenburg University in Malmö, Sweden. Through the conference, we seek to develop our community and the next generation of PA Theorists through the PA Theory Fellows Program and doctoral student workshop.

Second, we own and publish *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (ATP). Now supported by Taylor & Francis, ATP has been a distinguished academic outlet for more than four decades dedicated to philosophical, humanistic, and theoretical analysis of public

administration and governance. ATP has committed to scholarship that offers critical and normative perspectives on transforming public administration praxis and has long offered an outlet for novel theoretical approaches and marginalized voices. The journal's commitment to critical thought and inclusivity has never been more important.

About the Network's Board of Directors

With no permanent, paid staff, the Board of Directors is a "working board" composed of dynamic and diverse people committed to advancing the broad mission of the Network. While our history is long, our time as a formal organization has been brief. As such, we are now engaged in an exciting period of institution building and re-affirmation of role of critique and theory in the often turbulent and uncertain contexts of governance and the university.

Over the last several years, we have made significant advances in our financial and organizational planning, visibility within and outreach to the global field of public administration, cultivation of the "next generation" of PA theorists, and solidification of the Network and ATP as vital spaces for intellectual dialogue and creativity. The next members of the Board will be able to work at the heart of this important work and will find a collegial, supportive environment welcoming of new initiatives.

Current Board of Directors & Scope of Work

The Board of Directors consists of nine members, eight of whom are elected to three-year terms. The ninth member is the editor of *Administrative Theory & Praxis* and serves *ex officio*. Board officers are elected by the Board prior to the first Board meeting of the new fiscal year and the scope of Board work is outlined below. The 2018-19 Board is (with current roles and *term expiration*):

- **Brandi Blessett** (Co-Coordinator, PA Theory Fellows Program; *June 2019*)
- **Sebawit Bishu** (2019 Conference Site Liaison; Nominations Committee; *July 2021*)
- **Thomas Catlaw** (Chair, Nominations Committee; *June 2019*)
- **Roy Heidelberg** (Treasurer, 2021 Conference Site Search Committee, Ad Hoc Publications Committee; *July 2021*)
- **Gary Marshall** (Ad Hoc Publications Committee; *June 2019*)
- **Sean McCandless** (Social Media Coordinator, 2019 Conference Program Committee Liaison, Co-Coordinator, PA Theory Fellows Program; *July 2020*)
- **Billie Sandberg** (Vice Chair, 2021 Conference Site Search Committee; Facilitator, Board Governance Initiative; *July 2020*)
- **Sarah Surak** (Secretary, Nominations Committee; *July 2020*)
- **Staci Zavattaro** (Editor, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, *ex officio member*; Ad Hoc Publications Committee)

For more information about the Network and our bylaws, visit www.pattheory.org.

PA Theory Network – Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is comprised of Sebawit Bishu, Thomas Catlaw, and Sarah Surak.