Greetings!

Key had a busy winter recruiting new spring cohorts for both the Key MPA and Key Certificate Programs, preparing for the NASPAA reaccreditation site visit team and celebrating the School of Public Affairs 75th Anniversary. While Key MPA Cohorts Key 35, 36, and 37 and Key Certificate Open Enrollment 9 continued with their classes. And we aren’t slowing down anytime soon, as we look forward to welcoming Key 39 and three new USDA Certificate Cohorts at the end of the summer.

This spring we also welcomed a new member to the Key team; Dr. Ruth Zaplin as our new Deputy Director for the Key Executive Leadership Programs. Prior to becoming Deputy Director Dr. Zaplin was an Executive Coach for the Key Executive Leadership Certificate Programs. Please join us in welcoming Ruth to the Key family.

Several Key Cohorts have graduated since my last message to you. The members of Key 34 graduated this past fall and the members of Key 35 graduated this spring, with all members of both cohorts participating in the School of Public Affairs Commencement Ceremony on May 9, 2009. Cohort 9 of the Key Executive Leadership Certificate Program graduated this spring as well. We miss them already, but each of our graduates revealed growth, change, and promise as they continue on the path of becoming extraordinary leaders. We wish them well and look forward to sharing their future successes.

In January we welcomed Key 38 into the MPA program and Cohort 10 into the Certificate program. This was the first time that we started a Certificate Cohort in the spring and it was very successful. Cohort 10 will finish their program this October.

And as always, we are recruiting yet again for both the Key MPA and Certificate programs. We are now accepting applications for our Fall 2009 MPA cohort, Key 39, and Certificate Cohort 11. We need your support! If you have a colleague or friend that might be right for Key; I encourage you to please recommend they apply to the Program. Your continued support of the Key Programs is what has made Key so successful! For more information or to apply, go to spa.american.edu/key or contact Nina Allen at (202) 885-3857 or nallen@american.edu.

Bob Tobias, Director
Key Executive Leadership Programs
Welcome New Cohorts!

Please join Key in welcoming Key MPA Cohort Key 38 and Key Certificate Cohort 10 to the Key family. Both cohorts started their programs in early 2009, with 15 students in Key 38 and 11 students in Cohort 10.

Key 38 will be the first cohort to have the opportunity to take a comparative politics course abroad next summer in June 2010 in Brussels. Key is very excited to be the first Executive MPA program to offer an overseas component as part of the program. As you can see, despite these troubling economic times, Key is still going strong!

Congrats Key Grads!

Key is proud to announce the graduations of Key MPA Cohorts 34 and 35 and Key Certificate Cohort 9. In February Key held a dinner to celebrate the fall graduation of Key 34 along with welcoming Key 38 to the Key family. Key held a dinner for Key 35's graduation in April. Cohort 9’s graduation was celebrated in May.

Key Cohorts 34 and 35 participated in AU’s School of Public Affairs Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 9, 2009. This was the first commencement held by the School of Public Affairs not in conjunction with any other school and as such, did not require tickets for guests. Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) addressed the graduates, giving a lively speech that was full of practical advice.

Leadership Forums Continue to Tackle Current Issues Facing Government Leaders

The Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation held two Leadership Forums this winter at the National Press Club. Both Forums were well attended, drawing attendees from several different federal agencies.

The first Leadership Forum, held on February 19 and sponsored by CB Richard Ellis, was titled “Why should real property be viewed as a strategic asset? How effective management of real property can help increase employee productivity, improve operational success, and alleviate budget constraints.” The speakers for the Forum included Cathy Kronopolus, Acting Chief of Staff, General Services Administration; Major General Del Eulberg, The Civil Engineer, US Air Force; and Karen Ellzey, Executive Managing Director, Global Client Strategies, CB Richard Ellis.

The second Leadership Forum was held on March 24 and was sponsored by Watson Wyatt. This Forum asked “How can Human Capital organizations use the transition period to become a more valued partner to new agency political leaders?” Speakers at the Forum included Tom Caines, Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security; and Rick Hastings, Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of the Treasury.

The next Leadership Forum titled “What are the competencies needed by the HR Professional community to become a more valued partner to new agency political leaders?” will be held at the National Press Club on May 12. Go to http://www1.spa.american.edu/keycertificate/ for more information including a list of speakers and how to RSVP.
On March 17, 2009, Key Prof. Elaine Kaplan was appointed as the General Counsel at the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Kaplan began her legal career in the Solicitor's Office of the U.S. Department of Labor, first in the Employee Benefits Division, and later in the Division of Special Appellate and Supreme Court litigation. Most recently, she served as Senior Deputy General Counsel for the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents the interests of more than 150,000 federal employees nationwide. In this position and during her initial tenure with NTEU from 1984 to 1998, she litigated and supervised the litigation of cases at all levels of the federal court system.

In 1998, Kaplan was appointed by President Bill Clinton and unanimously confirmed by the Senate to serve as the head of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel, an independent agency whose mission is to protect the merit-based civil service by, among other things, investigating and prosecuting complaints alleging the commission of prohibited personnel practices, including whistleblower reprisal. After completing a successful five-year term at OSC in 2003, she became "of counsel" to Bernabei and Katz, a nationally recognized plaintiff's side employment law and civil rights firm. Kaplan re-joined NTEU in 2004.

Kaplan has appeared frequently at national and international conferences to speak on issues related to the merit-based civil service and on whistleblower protection; she has authored several articles on these and related subjects. Since 2004, she has been a member of the adjunct faculty of American University's School of Public Administration, teaching graduate-level classes covering legal issues that arise in the context of public administration, with an emphasis on constitutional law. She also served on President Barack Obama's transition team as an agency review team leader in the Government Operations Group.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Kaplan earned her J.D., cum laude, from Georgetown University in 1979. She received a bachelor's degree in history from the State University of New York in Binghamton in 1976.
Recent Student and Alumni Accomplishments

Key 37
Sheila Proudfoot of Key 37 received the Bronze Medal from the Director of the Census Bureau for her work with the Economic Census Management Team.

Key 34
Keith A. Jones successfully completed the Department of Homeland Security’s SES Candidate Development Program, receiving his Senior Executive Service Appointment on November 9, 2008. Keith is now the Deputy Executive Director, Information Technology Services Office, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Department of Homeland Security.

Tanga FitzGibbon was promoted to the position of Assistant Secretary at the Federal Maritime Commission on December 21, 2008.

Sean Morton is now the Superintendent for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in Key West, Florida.

Key 23
Congratulations to Bobby Schall on his recent promotion to Acting Deputy Regional Administrator of the National Capital Region, General Services Administration.

USDA CDP SES Certificate
On May 5, 2009 President Barack Obama nominated Homer Lee Wilkes as Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Got an update you would like to share? Then contact us at 202-885-3217 or key@american.edu.

Current Key Students Need Your Support!

Since 2004, the Donald G. Zauderer Scholarship Endowment has helped to support students in the Key Executive Leadership MPA Program. Each year this fund provides approximately $2,500 to partially support a student’s costs associated with earning a degree in the Key Executive Leadership MPA Program. To qualify for the Scholarship, applicants must be Key MPA students who are receiving limited or no financial support from their employer and who have completed one year in the program.

With agencies under great pressure tighten budgets, funding for education is being scaled back or cut out of many agency budgets, forcing many Key students to fund the program on their own. With your financial support, we can continue to ease the financial burdens of some Key students. For more information on how you can help, please contact the SPA Alumni Office at (202) 885-2661.