

UCF's 3rd Annual Public Administration Conference: "Collaborating and Networking in the 21st Century"

May 20, 2009

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The Department of Public Administration and the Center for Public and Nonprofit Management recently energized faculty, staff, students and community leaders with the annual UCF Public Administration Conference. The theme of the conference, now in its third year, was "*Collaborating and Networking in the 21st Century*." The speakers of the day focused on Generation Y's emerging effect on our workforce and the importance of skillful networking. Attendees at the April 17th conference were also able to participate in workshops featuring partnerships between public administration professionals and community organizations.

The keynote speaker of the conference was Dr. Peter Warren Singer, Senior Fellow and Director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. Singer, the youngest Senior Fellow to be named to the Brookings Institution, covered a wide variety of topics ranging from technology's affect on our current and future wars to Generation Y's important impact on our workforce. Discussing Generation Y, Singer stressed the importance of employers being able to fully understand this key demographic and thereby successfully utilizing their skills in the workplace. Following Dr. Singer, Robert Sheets, President & CEO of Government Services Group, Inc., discussed the importance of networking and the positive impact it can have on your career as well as your company. Some of the points discussed by Sheets included being proactive when it comes to networking, making sure that you have a 30 second "elevator pitch" whenever selling yourself to someone, cultivating meaningful relationships, and the resulting success they mean to you.

The research workshops continued the conference's theme on collaboration. Attendees were able to pick from four workshops throughout the day; each highlighting key research collaborations between the public sector and the community. These included collaborations in research and teaching, with citizens, across sectors and jurisdictions, and with technology. Each panel featured academics and practioners describing their success through effective partnerships.

The conference also highlighted research conducted by graduate students from UCF's Public Administration Department. Throughout the day, attendees were able to view student posters displaying research areas that were focused on by graduate assistants. Research areas featured in some of the posters included "Network Analysis in the Fight Against Crime and Terrorism" and "Community Based Research: Partnership Between the University of Central Florida and the Florida Sterling Council." Farhod Yuldashev took won first prize for his poster titled the "Evolution of NVOAD Disaster Response Network: From Federal Response to National Response Framework." As a reward, Central Florida's chapter of the American Society of Public Administrators (ASPA) awarded Yuldashev a cash prize.

The title sponsor for the conference was Government Services Group, Inc. (GSG). The Central Florida Marine Corps Foundation (www.centralfloridamarines.org) awarded student scholarships to the event. For 2010, the conference will focus on the challenges facing public administration in the 21st century.