

Larry Schroeder  
Rosemary O'Leary  
Dale Jones  
Ora-orn Poocharoen  
Syracuse University

## Routes to Scholarly Success in Public Administration: Is There a Right Path?

*The Successful Scholars Project examined the determinants of successful public administration scholars. We surveyed the top 89 public administration scholars alive today (nominated by leaders of five national organizations) and asked them to rank a set of characteristics and behaviors that may have helped them achieve their success. We then analyzed the curricula vitae of 63 of the scholars. This article reports our study's findings and the recommendations of our successful scholars. Scholars heralded good methodological training and quality mentoring as significant. For research, choosing important, cutting-edge issues to write about, not following fads, being oneself, and publishing quality works were touted as important. Presenting research at national conferences also was highly recommended (while chairing committees and serving as discussants were not). Most scholars recommended steering away from administrative positions and university politics. We conclude with lessons for budding public administration scholars as well as lessons for designing public administration doctoral programs.*

In any intellectual discipline, scholars are the explorers and developers of cognitive knowledge. Yet once fully immersed in a discipline, one looks around and wonders, why do some scholars flourish while others do not? Is it because they are so much smarter than the rest of us? Because they work harder? Because they tackle the big questions in the field? Because they graduated from a strong PhD program? Because they know the right people? Or because they are lucky? What makes a successful public administration scholar successful? Just as important, what do the scholars' characteristics and behaviors suggest for current PhD students hoping to become successful public administration scholars?

These are the questions we set out to answer in our Successful Scholars Project (SSP).<sup>1</sup> The approach we took (see the Research Design section of this article) was first to identify the successful living scholars in the field. Once we had identified them, we attempted to answer the questions in two ways. First, we asked the scholars, through a mailed survey, to rank a set of characteristics and behaviors that may have helped them achieve their status. Second, we re-

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**Larry Schroeder** is a professor of public administration at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He is a senior associate in the Global Affairs Institute. His current research focuses on local government finance, financial management, and intergovernmental fiscal relations in developing countries. **E-mail:** [ldschroe@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:ldschroe@maxwell.syr.edu).

**Rosemary O'Leary** is a professor of public administration at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. She is the director of the doctoral program in public administration at the Maxwell School, and senior research associate at the Campbell Public Affairs Institute. Her research focuses on environmental policy, public management, and law. Her latest book, *Managing for the Environment* (coauthored with Bob Durant, Dan Fiorino, and Paul Weiland), won two national "Best Book" awards. **E-mail:** [roleary@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:roleary@maxwell.syr.edu).

**Dale Jones** is an associate professor of public administration at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Between 2000 and 2002, he served as director of the Government Performance Project and director of the New Jersey Initiative, projects that assessed the management capacity of state, county, city, and municipal governments. His research focuses on leadership and management, performance-based management, and organization theory. **E-mail:** [vdjones@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:vdjones@maxwell.syr.edu).

**Ora-orn Poocharoen** is a doctoral candidate in the public administration program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Currently, she is a research associate at the Campbell Public Affairs Institute. Her research interests are government reforms, comparative public administration, and development theory. **E-mail:** [opoochar@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:opoochar@maxwell.syr.edu).

viewed their curricula vitae to glean from their professional histories additional characteristics of the scholars.

We begin by reviewing the literature that tackles similar, but not identical questions. Then, we focus on the results of our survey as well as a review of the curricula vitae of the scholars. The article first presents results related to the educational and career choices of the selected scholars and then addresses their research strategies. Finally, we comment on the implications of our study for future scholars and public administration PhD programs.

## The Literature

The Successful Scholars Project is unique. No one to date has published the results of a survey of the top living scholars in public administration to ascertain why they think they have been successful. Yet, there is a tangential literature that informed this project.

It is not uncommon in most disciplines for scholars to evaluate or rank their professional colleagues and organizations. Although such rankings do not gain the widespread attention given to national rankings of collegiate sports teams, they are generally studied and debated by members of the profession. The first articles that systematically ranked public administration and public affairs programs were published two decades ago (Morgan et al. 1981; Morgan and Meier 1982). They evaluated the reputation of public administration programs by surveying all representatives of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and evaluated program productivity by counting the number of articles authored by faculty that were published between 1970 and 1980 in 10 public administration journals. These articles found consistency between reputation and productivity ranks. The 1981 article established a methodology for ranking public administration programs that is still being used 20 years later.

Legge and Devore (1987) updated and expanded this research. They found the volume of research increased substantially for the most productive programs during the 1981 to 1985 period and confirmed Morgan and Meier's findings that size—based on either the number of students or faculty—did not relate to the reputation of the programs. They also determined that the productivity of public administration programs is not an outgrowth of research-oriented political science departments.

Since then, other researchers have carried out other similar studies. Forrester (1996) examined which schools are the most frequent contributors to the top 26 refereed public administration journals. Douglas (1996) examined 11 journals, counted publications by scholars in public administration programs to measure program productivity, and concluded that the higher-producing faculties have maintained their top positions and that there is a positive

relationship between faculty output and graduate student achievement.

Two other papers, one written for young economists and the other for political scientists, also influenced our approach to this research (although the methods applied in these two articles are quite different from the methods we employed). First, Hamermesh (1992) wrote an article intended for new academic economists. It is a how-to article that provides detailed tips on how to present papers at conferences, submit papers for publication, and review other scholars' papers. While based only on the author's experiences in the field, it was unique in that it focused on the socialization of new scholars.

The second paper, published in the same year and aimed at political science students and scholars, is by Meier and Stewart (1992) and is a tongue-in-cheek article titled "Rotisserie Political Science." The authors established a point system to score political scientists. Positive or negative points could be earned depending on the activities chosen, such as publication, convention participation, professional development, and assistance to the professional development of others. Through the use of humor, the authors were able to provide useful insights into the process of succeeding as a political science scholar.

During the past five years, three articles about scholarly activities within the field of public administration have been published. Rodgers and Rodgers (2000) studied publications of 91 assistant professors in public administration programs during 1990 to 1997 and found that 63 percent of the journals they published in were not public administration journals. The authors suggest that instead of using a fixed set of journals, rankings of public administration programs should be tied to the research productivity of faculty members affiliated with public administration programs. The authors conclude there are many "undisciplined mongrels" whose research cuts across several disciplines and, therefore, the scope of the field should be widened for determining rankings of public administration programs. Of particular relevance to our work is their recommendation that the unit of analysis should be the scholar and not the journal.

Cleary (2000) evaluates 168 public administration doctoral dissertations included in *Dissertation Abstracts 1998* employing the McCurdy–Cleary methodology first used in 1981. The results indicate an upward trend in the quality of public administration dissertations. Dissertation researchers were less likely than in previous years to use purely descriptive methods and single case studies with no theoretical or conceptual framework. The author stresses that researchers must maintain emphasis on the standards of quality—no matter how the research is conducted—and at the same time explore topics that are important to the advancement of the field of public administration.

The nature of public administration research and programs is also the topic of a recent paper by Wise (1999). She provides insights into the growth of public administration as a field of study, the output and products of the profession, and the status of the field. Results from 1980 to 1995 show that although the number of public administration programs declined, programs in public affairs and public policy have increased. Perhaps most relevant to our work is her finding that more than half of the authors who published in public administration journals do not regard themselves as public administration scholars.

Both the Rodgers and Rodgers and Wise papers suggest that, to understand the discipline better, more empirical research is needed on the individuals who make up the field of public administration. In this article, we have attempted for the first time to gather background information on successful, recognized scholars in the field, in the hope it will shed light on the factors contributing to their success. This, in turn, may assist those entering the field to become successful scholars in the future.

## Findings: Education and Career Choices

Everyone faces a number of choices upon the initiation and pursuit of a career. These include the choice of where to obtain an education and what employment options to pursue. This section focuses on these types of choices, while the next section concentrates on strategies related to research pursuits. Our database includes two types of information—factual data gleaned from the 63 submitted curricula vitae (CVs) and opinions expressed in both the answers to our structured survey questions and the open-ended responses submitted by many of the scholars.

### Education

All but two of our nominated scholars who submitted CVs had earned a doctoral degree; one held a master of public administration degree, and the other held a master of science degree in management. The 61 scholars with doctorates earned them between 1940 and 1988. The fact that two-thirds of the scholars earned their degrees between 1966 and 1980 (24 to 38 years ago) is not terribly surprising, as it takes some time for the quality of a researcher's scholarship to be recognized.

The institutions and disciplines in which the doctorates were earned are similarly concentrated. Although the 61 doctoral degrees earned by the respondents were granted by 28 different universities, 26 (42.6 percent) of the degrees were earned from four institutions—the University of Chicago, University of Southern California, Syracuse University, and Yale University. Thirty-six (59.0 percent) of the scholars had earned doctorates in political science,

while another 16 (26.2 percent) had earned degrees in public administration.

Those surveyed were asked to indicate the extent to which aspects of their doctoral education had contributed to their success as a scholar. Included in their choices were the rank or status of their PhD program, the quality of their PhD education, faculty members, course work, student research experience, networking opportunities during their PhD program, earning a degree in a particular discipline, and obtaining a postdoctoral degree.

In spite of the fact that the scholars' education was quite concentrated in relatively few universities and disciplines, their views about the importance of the attributes of their education were mixed (see table 1). The responses to only three aspects of graduate training stand out. One is the quality of the PhD program, which 50.0 percent of the respondents indicated was of high importance (a 6 or 7 on a 7-point Likert scale) to their success, with only 6.7 percent rating it a 1 or 2 on the scale.<sup>2</sup> Specific faculty in the PhD program was cited by 59.0 percent as highly important (on the other hand, 13.1 percent of the respondents indicated this was of low importance). And research experience during the PhD program was cited by 40.7 percent of the respondents as being of great importance, whereas only 6.8 percent of the respondents felt it was of little importance.

The remaining questions about PhD program experiences elicited mixed responses. The answers to the open-ended question about education illuminate this discussion. We did not anticipate the number of scholars (nearly one-fourth) who wrote about the quality of their undergraduate education and the effect it had on their later work as a scholar. A strong liberal arts background was touted by most, in addition to undergraduate internships, mentors, and writing a senior honors thesis.

At the doctoral level, good methodological training and interdisciplinary course work were frequently mentioned in the open-ended responses. Quality mentoring was mentioned by a half-dozen scholars as important. Here, the benefits concerned not only learning how to do research and publish, but gaining confidence in the process. Learning how to accept critiques of one's scholarly work also was touted as a benefit of a positive mentoring experience, as were high expectations communicated by mentors.

Other interesting written-in responses include having non-U.S. experiences in travel and research, real-world nonacademic experience, fellowships, and aiming high in terms of dissertation quality. Having good student colleagues in one's doctoral program was cited as pivotal by many. Finally, several scholars gave credit to their natural innate talents and natural curiosity, qualities that a PhD program may exploit but is unlikely to be able to create.

**Table 1 Responses to Level of Importance of Various Attributes of Scholars' Experiences**

Education	Percent of respondents choosing(a)							Extremes		Mean score(d)	Rank(e)	Percent responding
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low(b)	High(c)			
PhD program rank	8.6	8.6	15.5	15.5	22.4	12.1	17.2	17.2	29.3	4.40	31	92.1
PhD program quality	1.7	5.0	8.3	8.3	26.7	18.3	31.7	6.7	50.0	5.35	8	95.2
Specific faculty in PhD program	8.2	4.9	11.5	4.9	11.5	23.0	36.1	13.1	59.0	5.20	12	96.8
Courses taken for PhD	6.6	11.5	19.7	26.2	21.3	9.8	4.9	18.0	14.8	3.93	46	96.8
Research experience in PhD	1.7	5.1	11.9	16.9	23.7	23.7	16.9	6.8	40.7	4.95	18	93.7
Networking opportunity in PhD	25.8	9.7	14.5	11.3	14.5	17.7	6.5	35.5	24.2	3.58	52	98.4
Discipline of earned PhD	8.3	18.8	8.3	18.8	20.8	8.3	16.7	27.1	25.0	4.17	38	76.2
Taking a postdoctoral degree position	35.3	0.0	5.9	11.8	5.9	5.9	35.3	35.3	41.2	4.12	39	27.0
<b>Career choices</b>												
Reputation of first job department.	19.7	13.1	11.5	9.8	14.8	13.1	18.0	32.8	31.1	3.98	44	96.8
Reputation of current job department	6.6	4.9	8.2	14.8	29.5	16.4	19.7	11.5	36.1	4.84	22	96.8
Reputation of current university	8.2	13.1	8.2	24.6	18.0	14.8	13.1	21.3	27.9	4.28	36	96.8
Intellectual environment of current university	6.3	3.2	11.1	22.2	20.6	20.6	15.9	9.5	36.5	4.73	25	100.0
Serve as department chair	23.7	15.8	13.2	10.5	18.4	13.2	5.3	39.5	18.4	3.45	53	60.3
Serve as dean	25.0	6.3	6.3	18.8	12.5	12.5	18.8	31.3	31.3	4.00	41	25.4
Serve as associate dean	33.3	26.7	6.7	0.0	20.0	6.7	6.7	60.0	13.3	2.93	57	23.8
Director of PhD program	33.3	16.7	3.3	20.0	13.3	6.7	6.7	50.0	13.3	3.10	55	47.6
Director of research unit	12.0	20.0	8.0	12.0	24.0	20.0	4.0	32.0	24.0	3.92	47	39.7
Making geographic moves	16.7	12.5	10.4	14.6	18.8	14.6	12.5	29.2	27.1	4.00	42	76.2
Using sabbatical leaves	18.9	13.2	18.9	11.3	13.2	7.5	17.0	32.1	24.5	3.77	50	84.1
Government experience	6.4	2.1	17.0	6.4	27.7	8.5	31.9	8.5	40.4	5.00	16	74.6
Nonprofit experience	17.9	10.7	10.7	17.9	14.3	14.3	14.3	28.6	28.6	4.00	43	44.4
Private-sector experience	38.1	4.8	14.3	14.3	9.5	0.0	19.0	42.9	19.0	3.29	54	33.3
Consulting experience	5.8	13.5	9.6	21.2	23.1	13.5	13.5	19.2	26.9	4.37	32	82.5

(a) Percentages are based only on those not responding "not applicable."

(b) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 1 or 2. (c) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 6 or 7.

(d) Means computed for only those not responding "not applicable." (e) Rank of the mean scores among all questions on the questionnaire.

## Career Choices

Any new public administration scholar faces a variety of choices throughout his or her career: what sort of university or department to take a job in, whether to take a nonacademic job in government or the private (or nonprofit) sector sometime during the career, and whether to take administrative jobs when offered within a university environment. Our survey attempted to ascertain the views of the scholars about the importance to their ultimate success of these choices.

**Academic Jobs.** All but two of the successful scholars who submitted CVs have advanced through the academic ranks to reach the level of full professor, distinguished professor, or endowed chair. Those surveyed were asked to indicate aspects of their academic work experience that contributed greatly to their success as a scholar. Among the queries were the external reputation of the first department or school at which they had a job; the external reputation of their current department, school, or university; and the intellectual environment of their current department or school.

The respondents were also asked to indicate the importance to their careers of serving as a department chair, dean, associate dean, PhD program director, or director of a research unit. Making geographical moves between academic institutions also was a possible choice, as well as sabbatical leaves. Again, an open-ended question allowed respondents to write in different answers.

As table 1 shows, the reputation or environment of a department or university does not seem to matter to these scholars. For example, although 31.1 percent felt the reputation of the department where they took their first job was of high importance to their career achievements, a nearly equal proportion (32.8 percent) felt it was of low importance. The reputation of their current department fared a bit better, with 36.1 percent saying it was very important and only 11.5 percent stating it was unimportant. This result was similar to the response to the question pertaining to the importance of the intellectual environment of their current university: 36.5 percent stated it was very important, and 9.5 percent responded it was unimportant. The

reputation of their current university was unimportant to over one-fifth of the respondents and very important to about 28 percent.

Respondents generally viewed service positions, such as chairperson or dean, as very unimportant in their development as successful scholars. Only in the case of service as a dean did the respondents have an equal proportion stating the job was important to their success as a scholar and stating the job was very unimportant to their success. For the other administrative positions—department chair, associate dean, PhD program director, and director of a research unit—the proportion of responses at the low end (1 or 2) exceeded the proportion at the high end (6 or 7).

An analysis of the 63 curricula vitae submitted yields additional information. Table 2 reports the number of scholars that once held or are currently holding the positions, the combined number of years in those positions, and the average years the scholar has held the position. Any one scholar may have served in more than one of these administrative positions. Twenty of the 63 scholars (31.7 percent) had served as department chair. Likewise, 23 (36.5 percent) had directed a research unit, with eight (12.7 percent) having had tenure as both a research unit director and department chair. Rarely have the successful scholars served in higher university administration, dean, or department vice chair positions—only three to eight scholars (about 5 percent to 12 percent) were found in each of these positions. The implication here is that relatively few scholars have spent significant periods of time in university administrative positions.

**Table 2 Positions during Career**

University administrative position	Number of scholars who served in that position <sup>a</sup>	Total number of years among scholars in that position	Average years per scholar
Higher university administration	5	26	5.2
Dean	8	30	3.8
Associate dean	11	47	4.3
Department chair	20	113	5.7
Department vice chair	3	11	3.7
Director of PhD program	14	78	5.6
Director of MPA program	17	65	3.8
Director of research unit	23	140	6.1
Nonuniversity administrative position	Number of scholars who served in that nonuniversity <sup>b</sup> setting	Total number of years among scholars in that nonuniversity setting	Average years per scholar
Federal government	24	175	7.3
State government	18	66	3.7
Local government	17	61	3.6
Nonprofit sector	8	20	2.5
Private sector	7	51	7.3
No nonuniversity employment	15	—	—

(For 63 of 89 Nominated Scholars)

<sup>a</sup>A single scholar may have held more than one of these administrative positions.

<sup>b</sup>A single scholar may have served in more than one of these nonuniversity settings.

Most entrants into academia recognize that, unlike some other professions, geographic mobility is fairly common. About five in six of the scholars had made at least one move between universities.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-one (33.9 percent) had been employed by one program, and 18 (29.0 percent) had been with two programs before their current universities. Thirteen of the scholars (21.0 percent) had been at three or more institutions prior to their current location. It is recognized that scholars generally are not employed at the same programs where they received their doctorate. The CVs confirmed this to be true. Based on 63 CVs, just four of the scholars are currently located at the university where they received their PhD.

Although the vast majority of the successful scholars have moved between university positions, only 27.1 percent of the respondents to our survey rated “making geographic moves between academic institutions” as highly important to their success. A nearly equal proportion of those who had moved felt that such moves were of little importance.

Of the respondents, approximately 85 percent had taken advantage of sabbatical leaves. But among them, nearly a third stated they were not important to their success, with about one-quarter stating they were very important.

Several of the answers to the open-ended questions flesh out these dimensions of academic jobs. Many scholars mentioned the importance of a collegial environment in which research is rewarded. The following comments are typical:

- “Good colleagues who constantly stimulate me, research grants, and university employers who provided clear incentives to publish.”
  - “A collegial work environment, not a lot of in-fighting or energy lost to university politics. Find good co-authors with complementary interests and strengths.”
- Others mentioned doing things their own way:
- “Never teaching summer school, turning down administrative jobs, and ending my consulting career all greatly assisted in my development as a top-notch scholar.”
  - “I funded most of my own research from consulting fees and book royalties. Deans don’t like it, but it allows you to do research much more often on your own topics, not those of funders, and using your own methodology, not those defined by funders as ‘scientific’ or ‘rigorous.’”
- Others mentioned the importance of teaching quality students—especially midcareer students—who present the scholars with cutting-edge research questions.
- “I have found working with students who are government employees—both in the United States and abroad—is not only stimulating and very rewarding, but is an excellent check on research agendas and research questions. These students serve, in effect, as a constantly revolving ‘expert panel.’”

The only negative answers to the open-ended question concerned spending too much time on administrative duties.

**Nonacademic Jobs.** Table 2 summarizes the type and extent of participation in nonuniversity positions by the 63 scholars represented with curricula vitae. It shows the number of scholars who held jobs in nonacademic settings by type of employment, together with the combined number of years for the various positions, and the average years per participating scholar in each position. (Again, one scholar may have served in more than one of these nonuniversity settings.) The data reveal that 47 scholars (74.6 percent) held positions outside the academic setting, but only 30 (47.6 percent) had accumulated more than three years outside academia during their careers. An important factor from a detailed examination of the curricula vitae, however, reveals that when a scholar spent time in the public, non-profit, or private sectors, it was usually before earning a PhD or in the first few years after completing it.<sup>4</sup>

For those who opted to get experience outside academe, the bulk of their nonacademic service was in government as opposed to the not-for-profit or private sectors. Within the government sector, the federal level was the most common choice; of the 42 scholars who served in at least one of the governmental sectors, 24 (57.1 percent) worked in the federal government. Federal employment most commonly entailed working with the executive branch. No generalizations can be made, however, as to which department within the federal government was most popular, as the chosen scholars had gained experience in a large number of federal agencies. Time spent in federal positions averaged 7.3 years per scholar, whereas time in state jobs and local positions averaged about half that amount. However, four scholars spent their complete careers (a total of 91 years) in federal service, significantly skewing the number of federal years. When those four scholars are excluded, the remaining 20 scholars have a combined federal service of 84 years, for an average of 4.2 years per scholar.

At the state government level, 18 of 63 scholars (28.6 percent) totaled 66 years, for an average of 3.7 years per scholar. At the local government level, 17 of 63 scholars (27.0 percent) accumulated 61 years, for an average of 3.6 years each. None of the selected scholars had spent their entire careers in either state or local government.

Very few of our top scholars had work experience at nonprofit organizations or in the private sector. Eight of 63 scholars (12.7 percent) had nonprofit experience, for an average 2.5 years each. Private-sector work is also rare, with seven scholars (11.1 percent) gaining that kind of experience, for an average of 7.3 years each.

The successful scholars we surveyed were asked whether any nonacademic work experience contributed significantly to their success as a scholar. For those who responded to these questions (and who probably had such experiences),

government experience was viewed as highly important to about 40 percent of the scholars. None of the other types of nonacademic jobs showed a preponderance of the respondents stating the experience had been important to their scholarly success. The implication is that scholarly success is built primarily from academic experience rather than from other pursuits.

The answers to the open-ended question were, again, mixed. Experience on panels of the National Academy of Public Administration, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and National Academy of Science was mentioned most frequently as important nonacademic work. While several scholars mentioned the importance of their work experience before earning their doctorate (for instance, Peace Corps and government positions), a surprising answer was the importance of parenthood as an “other job.” “Being a parent has made me a more balanced scholar and human being,” wrote one respondent. “When you have kids you learn to be focused, focused, focused—otherwise you’d drown,” wrote another.

In summary, relatively few of the top scholars have held professional positions outside academia beyond a few years in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors during their careers. However, top scholars perform service and gain valuable experience in other ways. Analysis of the curricula vitae reveals that many of them are actively involved as fellows with the National Academy of Public Administration, principals with the Council for Excellence in Government, and guest scholars and fellows with the Brookings Institution. Furthermore, almost all of the top scholars conducted consulting activities with federal, state, and local governments, even though most did not attribute much of their success to these experiences.

## Findings: Research and Research-Related Strategies

The reputations of scholars depend on their research output; again, a variety of choices must be made when approaching research. In this section, we examine a variety of research-related strategies based on both the actual histories of our nominated successful scholars and their opinions about the relative importance of their choices. One type of choice concerns research methods, topics, and strategies related to publishing; another concerns participation in professional organizations. Finally, general strategic behaviors emerged that may go a long way toward separating the highly successful from the less successful scholars.

### Research

Choices about research included decisions regarding which research topics to address and which outlets to utilize in publishing that research.

**Table 3 Responses to Level of Importance of Various Attributes of Scholars' Experiences**

Research choices	Percent of respondents choosing(a)							Extremes		Mean score(d)	Rank(e)	Percent responding
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low(b)	High(c)			
Dissertation	1.6	14.8	8.2	23.0	21.3	13.1	18.0	16.4	31.1	4.59	27	96.8
Public importance of topics	3.2	4.8	11.3	17.7	24.2	29.0	9.7	8.1	38.7	4.81	23	98.4
Theoretical importance of topics	3.3	8.2	6.6	21.3	24.6	21.3	14.8	11.5	36.1	4.79	24	96.8
Research methods used	7.5	9.4	15.1	20.8	17.0	17.0	13.2	17.0	30.2	4.34	33	84.1
Address cutting-edge issues	3.3	1.6	3.3	18.0	21.3	34.4	18.0	4.9	52.5	5.28	11	96.8
Policy-oriented topics	10.0	5.0	11.7	26.7	13.3	18.3	15.0	15.0	33.3	4.43	30	95.2
Single-authored articles	1.6	8.2	0.0	13.1	14.8	27.9	34.4	9.8	62.3	5.52	5	96.8
Jointly authored articles	6.8	3.4	5.1	15.3	15.3	35.6	18.6	10.2	54.2	5.10	14	93.7
Single-authored books	1.9	0.0	3.8	15.1	3.8	26.4	49.1	1.9	75.5	5.94	2	84.1
Jointly authored books	1.8	0.0	10.9	18.2	12.7	32.7	23.6	1.8	56.4	5.33	9	87.3
Choosing specific journals	13.7	3.9	9.8	15.7	15.7	25.5	15.7	17.6	41.2	4.55	28	81.0
Writing op-ed pieces	36.8	31.6	10.5	13.2	7.9	0.0	0.0	68.4	0.0	2.24	59	60.3
Attending conferences	1.6	4.8	7.9	12.7	39.7	20.6	12.7	6.3	33.3	4.97	17	100.0
Presenting scholarly papers	1.6	3.2	4.8	9.5	28.6	28.6	23.8	4.8	52.4	5.41	6	100.0
Chairing panels	4.9	18.0	19.7	26.2	16.4	8.2	6.6	23.0	14.8	3.82	49	96.8
Serving as discussant	5.1	22.0	16.9	27.1	16.9	6.8	5.1	27.1	11.9	3.69	51	93.7
Journal editor	4.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	12.0	24.0	44.0	12.0	68.0	5.60	4	39.7
Associate editor of journal	6.3	12.5	6.3	6.3	18.8	25.0	25.0	18.8	50.0	4.94	19	25.4
Membership in organizations	11.5	11.5	16.4	21.3	19.7	9.8	9.8	23.0	19.7	3.95	45	96.8
Leadership in organizations	3.9	7.8	2.0	17.6	15.7	25.5	27.5	11.8	52.9	5.20	13	81.0
Active participation in organizations	5.0	5.0	6.7	18.3	26.7	21.7	16.7	10.0	38.3	4.88	20	95.2

(a) Percentages are based only on those not responding "not applicable."

(b) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 1 or 2. (c) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 6 or 7.

(d) Means computed for only those not responding "not applicable." (e) Rank of the mean scores among all questions on the questionnaire.

**Topics and Methods.** Those surveyed were asked to indicate which, if any, aspects of their approaches to research had contributed significantly to their success as a scholar. Among the answers they could select were the importance of their dissertation, the public importance of their research topics, the theoretical importance of their research topics, the particular methodology they used, whether they addressed cutting-edge issues in their research, and whether they researched policy-oriented topics. An open-ended question gave respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their answers and to provide additional insights.

There was no strong consensus that the choice of research topics or methods played a primary role in determining the success of the surveyed scholars (table 3). The only question for which even a simple majority (52.5 percent) thought it was very important to their success was in choosing topics that "address cutting-edge issues." Less than 5 percent of the respondents felt this was very unimportant to their success.

The only other question for which there appeared to be relatively strong opinions in one direction was the public importance of research topics. Here, 38.7 percent of the respondents viewed this as very important, with 8.1 percent of the opinion that it was of very little importance. The theoretical importance of research topics was cited as very important by 36.1 percent, but 11.5 percent viewed it as unimportant (a ratio of approximately 3:1).

When the responses to these several questions were cor-

related, we found that "addressing cutting-edge issues" correlated most highly with "public importance of topics" and "theoretical importance of topics" (correlations of approximately 0.57), but correlated at a very low level ( $r = 0.22$ ) with "policy-oriented topics."

The responses to the open-ended questions indicated a divide between those who felt they were addressing mainstream topics and those who deliberately shunned mainstream topics. "I deliberately avoided mainstream topics," wrote one scholar, "for mainstream was already crowded and I didn't think I would be heard or noticed there. Also, I felt that nearly anything theoretical I would say at a young age would be ignored." Contrasted to this is one scholar who wrote, "I have addressed important, basic, long-term theoretical and practical issues from the start. I tried to answer the important questions."

Doctoral students currently wrestling with the choice of dissertation topics may be pleased to learn that although about one-third of the respondents thought their choice of dissertation topic was very important to their success, about one in six scholars felt it was of very little importance. Likewise, the research methods used were viewed as very important by about one-third of the scholars, with about one-sixth stating the methods were of little importance.

**Publishing Strategies.** The successful scholars were asked to indicate the importance of single-authored, peer-reviewed articles; jointly authored, peer-reviewed articles; single-authored books; jointly authored books; targeting

specific journals; and op-ed pieces. Respondents were given an opportunity to list specific journals that had been important to them, as well as to offer any other pertinent information.

While publishing is obviously a critical activity for any successful research scholar, the choice of outlet for that research is less prescribed by these luminaries in the field. As table 3 shows, approximately three-quarters of the respondents felt that a single-authored book was most critical to their success, with only 1.9 percent stating that a solely authored book was unimportant. (Ten of the 63 respondents failed to respond to this question, suggesting they have not published a single-authored book. If they were added to the group stating the single-authored books were unimportant, it would mean that about 20 percent felt it was not important to their success.) Still, of the 59 different behaviors and characteristics covered in the questionnaire, single-authored books ranked second in terms of the mean Likert-scale score.

Single-authored articles were viewed by 62.3 percent as being very important to their success (and ranked fifth among all of the questions in terms of the mean scale score); only 9.8 percent stated that such articles were unimportant. Coauthored works were viewed as very important by a majority of those responding. However, about one in 10 of the scholars felt that coauthored articles were unimportant to their scholarly success, while about 2 percent felt the same way about coauthored books.

The answers to our “specific journal” question were interesting. Forty-one percent felt that specific journal outlets were important, but 17.6 percent felt this was not important. The 38 respondents who had an opinion on (or experience with) op-ed pieces were very clear that these outlets were not important to their careers.

Examining the answers to the open-ended questions yielded another divide among the scholars: those who focused on journals friendly to practitioners and those who targeted journals meant only for academics. “I have tried to publish in both scholarly public administration journals as well as policy journals,” wrote one respondent. “But I have never tried to reach the practitioner world.” In contrast, many scholars indicated they deliberately set out to bridge the worlds of practitioners and academics.

Most interesting from the open-ended questions were the lessons learned and articulated by some scholars:

- “Be without a strategy—simply write something you believe is important.”
- “Take critical peer reviews as positive feedback. Always revise and resubmit.”
- “Keep writing, keep your name out there—do the small things. Remember that what you write represents you: Always write clearly—be your own editor.”
- “Be creative! It’s okay to be slightly off-beat.”

- “Try to do the highest quality work possible without worrying too much about how much and how fast the publications come out.”
- “Submit your work to the top journals, then work your way down if needed.”

Our curricula vitae analysis concerning publishing concentrated on single-authored and jointly authored peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as single-authored and jointly authored books.<sup>5</sup> In addition, our analysis considered only the top 28 public administration journals (Forrester 1996; Rodgers and Rodgers 2000).<sup>6</sup>

Table 4 contains data related to single-authored and jointly authored, peer-reviewed journal publications by 63 of the top scholars who submitted curricula vitae. Most of the single-authored articles appear in eight journals. Of the journals, *Public Administration Review (PAR)* had the highest number of articles with 193 of 563 (34.3 percent) and the highest number of contributing scholars at 45 of 63 (71.4 percent). The most significant findings regarding single-authored journal publications are that about one-third of all the articles appeared in *PAR* and nearly three of every four of the top scholars have published as a single author in *PAR*.

The journals with the next seven highest number of articles were *Administration and Society (A&S)* with 48 articles by 24 scholars; the *International Journal of Public Administration (IJPA)* with 39 articles by 19 authors; the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (J-PART)* with 37 articles by 22 academics; *Public Administration Quarterly* with 28 articles by 15 scholars; *Public Budgeting and Finance* with 26 articles by 10 authors; *Policy Studies Journal* with 25 articles by 17 academics; and the *Review of Public Personnel Administration (RPPA)* with 25 articles by 11 scholars. These seven journals included 228 articles (40.5 percent) by the scholars. The remaining 20 journals had 142 articles (25.2 percent). Although most scholars had published in several journals, some chose to publish in a limited few. For example, one scholar had published 19 articles in seven journals, but concentrated his publications with five each in three journals—*A&S*, *J-PART*, and *PAR*. Another scholar had published 12 articles in five journals, but seven of the articles appeared in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

A relatively even spread of publications per scholar exists. The number of single-authored journal publications per scholar ranged from zero to 42. Thirty of 63 scholars (47.6 percent) had published nine or more single-authored articles and 33 scholars (52.4 percent) wrote eight or fewer single-authored articles.

Most of the jointly authored articles appeared in six journals. *PAR* again had the highest number of articles with 140 of 465 (30.1 percent) and the highest number of con-

**Table 4 Outlets for Peer-Reviewed Journal Publications**

Leading public administration journals <sup>a</sup>	Single-authored			Jointly authored		
	Number of articles	Number of scholars	Average articles per scholar	Number of articles	Number of scholars	Average articles per scholar
<i>Administration and Society (A&amp;S)</i>	48	24	2.0	36	16	2.3
<i>American Review of Public Administration (ARPA)</i>	18	16	1.1	20	14	1.4
<i>International Journal of Public Administration (IJPA)</i>	39	19	2.1	29	16	1.8
<i>Journal of Policy Analysis And Management (JPAM)</i>	19	6	3.2	Less than 10		
<i>Journal of Public Administration Research &amp; Theory (J-PART)</i>	37	22	1.7	48	22	2.2
<i>Publius (Pub)</i>	12	9	1.3	17	9	1.9
<i>Public Administration Quarterly (PAQ)</i>	28	15	1.9	13	8	1.6
<i>Public Administration Review (PAR)</i>	193	45	4.3	140	40	3.5
<i>Public Budgeting and Finance (PBF)</i>	26	10	2.6	10	6	1.7
<i>The Public Manager (PM)</i>	12	9	1.3	Less than 10		
<i>Public Performance and Management Review (PPMR)</i>	14	7	2.0	12	8	1.5
<i>Policy Studies Journal (PSJ)</i>	25	17	1.5	16	14	1.1
<i>Policy Studies Review (PSR)</i>	Less than 10	—	—	11	9	1.2
<i>Review of Public Personnel Administration (RPPA)</i>	25	11	2.3	24	12	2.0
<i>State and Local Government Review (SLGR)</i>	14	10	1.4	15	9	1.7
<i>Social Science Quarterly (SSQ)</i>	11	7	1.6	25	10	2.5
Remainder of "top 28" public administration journals	42	25	1.7	49	37	1.3
Total	563	63	8.9	465	63	7.4

(For 63 of 89 Nominated Scholars)

<sup>a</sup>Twenty-eight journals were included in our list of "top journals" (see the text). The titles listed below include only those for which there were at least 10 articles published by the sample of 63 scholars for which curricula vitae were available.

tributing scholars at 40 of 63 (63.5 percent). The most significant findings regarding jointly authored journal publications are that about one-third of all the articles appeared in *PAR* and nearly two-thirds of the top scholars published jointly authored articles in *PAR*. The journals with the next five highest number of articles are *J-PART* with 48 articles by 22 scholars; *A&S* with 36 articles by 16 authors; *IJPA* with 29 articles by 16 scholars; *Social Science Quarterly* with 25 articles by 10 academics; and *RPPA* with 24 articles by 12 scholars. These five journals included 162 articles (34.8 percent) by the scholars. The remaining 22 journals had 163 articles (35.0 percent).

The respondents viewed book publications as the most tangible factor leading to their success. Single-authored and jointly authored book publications by the 63 scholars that returned CVs are tabulated in table 5.<sup>7</sup> The scholars wrote 172 single-authored books, with a range of zero to 14 books per scholar. Most of the scholars published a few books each, with 50 of 63 scholars (79.4 percent) writing four or fewer. These same scholars wrote 118 books with others, with a range of zero to 13 books per scholar. A large majority, 48 of 63 (76.2 percent), wrote two or fewer jointly authored books.

### Professional Organizations

Our survey asked the successful scholars to indicate the importance of several variables related to professional organizations: attending conferences, presenting scholarly papers, serving as a panel chair, serving as a discussant, serving as the editor of an academic journal, serving as the

associate editor of an academic journal, membership in professional organizations, leadership roles in professional organizations, and active participation in professional organizations. An open-ended question allowed respondents to write any other thoughts they had on the topic and how it related to their success as a scholar.

In the area of participation in professional organizations, the results suggest it is not so important that you simply participate, but *how* you participate. Thus, relatively passive activities, such as simply being a member of a professional organization, were not deemed to be particularly important; this ranked 45th among the 59 different attributes and behaviors (table 3). However, taking a leadership role in professional organizations was cited by about 53 percent as being very important to their success (with 11.8 percent stating it was unimportant).

**Table 5 Books Published by Scholars**

Single-authored books		Jointly authored books	
Number of books published	Number of scholars	Number of books published	Number of scholars
14	1	13	1
12	1	9	1
8	4	8	3
7	3	5	1
6	1	4	4
5	3	3	5
4	5	2	11
3	5	1	14
2	12	0	23
1	13		
0	15		
Total: 172	Total: 63	Total: 118	Total: 63

(For 63 of 89 Nominated Scholars)

Participation in conferences was also cited as being very important, but again, the type of participation matters. Presenting scholarly papers was cited by 52.4 percent of the respondents as being very important to their success, with only 4.8 percent saying it was of little importance. On the other hand, serving as a panel chair or discussant had little influence, with approximately twice the proportion of respondents citing it as of little importance as those stating it was of great importance.

Those who wrote additional responses to our open-ended question listed the benefits of conferences as connecting them to an international network of scholars and forcing a deadline for papers that would later become journal articles. Other benefits touted were providing visibility as well as a platform for their scholarly ideas. Still other benefits mentioned were making contacts and learning what others are doing in the field.

The data regarding the role of serving as a journal editor are interesting: Only approximately 40 percent of the survey participants responded to the question; however, of those who did respond, 44 percent rated it as “most important” in their scholarly success, with only 12 percent giving it a rank of 1 or 2 on the seven-point scale. However, if the 60 percent who did not respond to the question have never been journal editors and, in spite of that, are still successful scholars, the data suggest that serving as an editor is not that critical to success as a scholar.

To capture other dimensions of their success, our CV analysis examined the extent of their leadership in professional associations and with journals. Our analysis discovered that almost all of the scholars were extensively in-

involved with associations in such roles as section president, section chair, committee chair, and committee member. Thirty-three of 63 scholars (52.4 percent) had been or were the president of a professional association (national or subnational). Additionally, almost all spent significant amount of time in roles with journals such as member of the board of editors, referee, symposium editor, and book editor. Seventeen of 63 scholars (27.0 percent) occupied editor positions for 147 combined years, for an average of 8.6 years per scholar. Moreover, 13 scholars (20.6 percent) served as associate editor for 124 total years, for an average of 9.5 years each. The journals for both editor and associate editor were many of the same top public administration journals listed in table 4.

### Findings: Other Strategies and Behavior

A final section of our survey asked the scholars to indicate the importance of other strategies and behaviors, including obtaining research grants and contracts, seizing windows of opportunity for their research topics, influencing public policies, obtaining press coverage, promoting their research in other ways, addressing cutting-edge issues, public speaking engagements, testifying before legislative bodies, and serving as a special advisor to elected officials. Other choices were networking with other academics, networking with government officials, remaining at their PhD program until their degree requirements were completed, winning awards, hard work, timing, and luck. An open-ended question allowed respondents to write in other answers.

**Table 6 Responses to Level of Importance of Various Attributes of Scholars' Experiences**

Other strategies	Percent of respondents choosing(a)							Extremes		Mean score(d)	Rank(e)	Percent responding
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low(b)	High(c)			
Obtaining grants/contracts	8.5	16.9	6.8	13.6	23.7	15.3	15.3	25.4	30.5	4.34	34	93.7
Seizing research opportunities	0.0	3.6	10.9	14.5	18.2	27.3	25.5	3.6	52.7	5.31	10	87.3
Influencing policies	7.0	22.8	7.0	15.8	24.6	8.8	14.0	29.8	22.8	4.11	40	90.5
Obtaining press coverage	29.6	11.1	16.7	27.8	11.1	3.7	0.0	40.7	3.7	2.91	58	85.7
Promoting your research	4.8	14.3	4.8	14.3	28.6	19.0	14.3	19.0	33.3	4.62	26	33.3
Addressing cutting-edge issues	0.0	3.6	5.5	14.5	23.6	29.1	23.6	3.6	52.7	5.40	7	87.3
Public speaking	8.9	10.7	10.7	23.2	17.9	16.1	12.5	19.6	28.6	4.29	35	88.9
Public testifying	22.7	22.7	15.9	18.2	9.1	4.5	6.8	45.5	11.4	3.09	56	69.8
Serve as government advisor	17.1	17.1	11.4	17.1	5.7	11.4	20.0	34.3	31.4	3.91	48	55.6
Networking with academics	1.6	8.2	16.4	8.2	26.2	19.7	19.7	9.8	39.3	4.87	21	96.8
Networking with government officials	10.2	13.6	10.2	23.7	15.3	10.2	16.9	23.7	27.1	4.19	37	93.7
Remaining until degree finished	18.8	4.2	10.4	10.4	12.5	16.7	27.1	22.9	43.8	4.52	29	76.2
Winning awards	1.8	8.8	5.3	14.0	28.1	21.1	21.1	10.5	42.1	5.05	15	90.5
Hard work	0.0	0.0	3.2	1.6	6.3	15.9	73.0	0.0	88.9	6.54	1	100.0
Timing/luck	0.0	3.2	8.1	9.7	14.5	25.8	38.7	3.2	64.5	5.68	3	98.4

(a) Percentages are based only on those not responding “not applicable.”

(b) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 1 or 2.

(c) The percentage (excluding n.a.) responding 6 or 7.

(d) Means computed for only those not responding “not applicable.”

(e) Rank of the mean scores among all questions on the questionnaire.

The respondents were nearly unanimous in one piece of strategic advice. Nearly 90 percent of the scholars stated their success was attributable to hard work, with none citing it as unimportant (table 6). At the same time (perhaps with a sense of modesty), nearly two-thirds of the respondents stated that good timing and some luck were also very important to their success (with only 3.2 percent arguing these were of no importance). Thus, although luck may play a role, the scholars believe it was primarily through their work effort that they achieved their success.

The question then arises as to whether the scholars feel that specific types of activities (other than the previously cited publishing of articles and books) had helped them to achieve their status as scholars. Unfortunately, the advice is far from uniform. For example, only about three in 10 felt that obtaining grants and contracts was important to their success, with one-quarter of the respondents stating this activity was of very little importance. Likewise, obtaining press coverage and testifying before or serving as an advisor to government officials were viewed primarily as unimportant to the respondents' ultimate success as scholars. While 22.8 percent stated that influencing policies was very important to their success, nearly 30 percent said it was of very little importance. Only one-third of the scholars replied to the question about promoting their research; of those, a third (one-ninth of the total) felt it was important to their success.

There were three strategies (in addition to hard work) that were viewed more positively by the scholars. As before, choosing research topics that address cutting-edge issues and seizing research opportunities when they arise were viewed by slightly over half of the respondents as being very important to their success. Networking with other academics was another activity that apparently led to important positive results, for nearly 40 percent of the respondents (with only about 10 percent stating that it was of little importance). On the other hand, networking with government officials was not considered important.

While hard work was the overwhelming attribute associated with scholarly success, another strategy, commonly given as advice to PhD students ("Don't leave here without your degree"), was not viewed as that important to the success of the scholars represented in this sample. Only about one-third stated this strategy was critical to their success, with about 40 percent (including those for whom the question did not apply) stating it was of little importance. Of course, many of those represented here earned their degrees some time ago; circumstances may have changed sufficiently to make their life experience less relevant for young public administration scholars today.

Finally, perhaps reflecting the combination of hard work *and* good luck, 42 percent of the scholars stated that winning awards was very important to their success

as scholars, with about 10 percent saying it was of little importance.

Among the most frequently mentioned answers to our open-ended question concerning other strategies was a focus on quality, not being afraid to swim outside the mainstream, and not engaging in strategies to enhance one's reputation:

- "Quality of work. I have always strived for quality of work."
- "I have tried to pursue a rigorous, but essentially common sense research agenda."
- "Being willing to swim outside the mainstream. Being able to originate new ideas and approaches. Having something new to say and saying it well."
- "I don't engage in activities to enhance my reputation. I assume that I get consultantships, requests for advice, and requests from the press because of my reputation, which speaks for itself."
- "Not being afraid to stand alone in the pursuit of questions/areas of inquiry that may be considered intellectually 'incorrect' by conventional standards."
- "I focused on research and writing that I enjoyed doing and found intellectually provocative rather than doing some calculation of reputation cost-benefit."
- "I knew what I wanted to achieve and I had a strategy for getting there. I did not pursue someone else's career; I set my own goals and objectives."

Some scholars mentioned fear and survival as primary motivators:

- "Survival. Approaching research and publication as an organizational and management challenge."
- "I was so terrified of not getting tenure, not being promoted to full, etc ... that I overshot the mark by about 300%. This resulted in 20 awards for research and teaching."

Finally, several scholars mentioned the serendipity of finding a few kind-hearted people along the way who helped them, most of whom would not be considered "big scholars:"

- "Finding a mentor when young—someone to teach you how to get published and how to make network connections is absolutely critical."
- "A few helpful souls, here and there, and especially at critical moments, whereas curiously, only one of these is a 'big scholar.'"

## Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Different types of conclusions can be drawn from our analysis. We conclude with important lessons learned for budding public administration scholars. Additionally, the research offers insights for those designing PhD programs in public administration and public affairs.

## Lessons for Budding Public Administration Scholars

From our analysis of our survey of 89 successful scholars, as well as our analysis of 63 curricula vitae, several lessons learned can be gleaned for public administration PhD students and young scholars:

First, choose your PhD program carefully, particularly the faculty members with whom you can work and do research even while pursuing a degree. Get broad, interdisciplinary training with outstanding methods. However, the exact title of your degree and the specific courses you choose are less likely to be important in your career than other decisions you make.

Second, be yourself. Research what you love. Find out what you do best, then maximize your strengths. Several scholars concluded our survey by urging emerging scholars to avoid fashion and to be true to themselves. Don't be afraid to take intellectual risks. Have confidence in your own judgment about what is worth pursuing. Don't buy into others' intellectual agendas for funding reasons—hang onto your own ideas and pursue them all the time. Work out your own identity as a scholar.

Third, branch out beyond American public administration. Read broadly. Do comparative research. Participate in the wider intellectual life of the university.

Fourth, you must publish to become a successful scholar. It probably doesn't matter a great deal whether they are articles or books, singly or jointly authored. Simply publish, but aim for quality, quality, quality.

Fifth, build a corpus of articles in your area of choice rather than publishing random articles on a range of topics.

Sixth, present scholarly papers at meetings and, if possible, take on leadership roles in professional organizations. However, sometimes say “thanks but no thanks” to offers to serve as journal editors or simply as a discussant at a conference.

Seventh, work very hard on important issues and take advantage of research opportunities as they arise. With such good timing, and perhaps a bit of luck, and with the assistance of your network of other academics, you may win an award. But don't be concerned with such activities as making public speeches, testifying before legislatures, or even attempting to obtain press coverage or promoting your own research in other ways. Simply work hard and publish, publish, publish.

Eighth, set high standards for yourself.

Ninth, new job seekers probably should care less about the reputation of the department where they take their first job; once you establish a reputation as a good scholar, you will find a spot in a highly reputable department. A positive work environment with supportive colleagues is important.

Tenth, remember that being a successful scholar is not the most important thing in life. In fact, several scholars reminded us that their most important professional legacy most likely will not be their scholarship. Rather, it will be the education of future generations of sophisticated and aware public administrators.

## Lessons for Designing Public Administration PhD Programs

There also are important lessons for public administration doctoral programs from this analysis of the top public administration scholars. Schools and departments of public administration that seek to best prepare their PhD graduates can benefit from the following recommendations:

First, place special emphasis on doctoral-level seminar courses in terms of faculty teaching them, course content, and course expectations for students.

Second, give students broad exposure to research topics, research methods, journals, and scholars inside and outside your faculty.

Third, set high expectations for students.

Fourth, ensure that students have a significant opportunity to engage in journal-article critique sessions in their courses.

Fifth, challenge students to think about, discuss, and write about cutting-edge issues, topics of public importance, and the theoretical importance of their topics.

Sixth, require that rigorous research methods be demonstrated in course work and papers.

Seventh, establish events such as monthly seminars or annual competitions to give students the opportunity to present scholarly papers.

Eighth, provide funds and other support for students to present papers at academic conferences.

Ninth, allow students to work closely with faculty to gain research experience and become socialized into the culture of academia.

Tenth, encourage students to read (and critique) the works of the top public administration scholars.

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## Notes

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1. One of the authors of this article is a seasoned scholar and the former director of a PhD program. A second author is a “mid-life scholar” who is the current director of a PhD program. A third author is an emerging scholar seeking to build his career in the field, while the fourth author is currently a PhD student. The entire 31 page report of the Successful Scholars project may be downloaded free of charge at [www.maxwell.syr.edu/Campbell/Library%20papers/OLeary\\_WP7.pdf](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/Campbell/Library%20papers/OLeary_WP7.pdf).
2. In our discussion of the results, we will term responses of 6 or 7 on the scale to indicate “high” importance (or very important) and 1 or 2 on the scale as “low” importance (or not important).
3. For this analysis, “previous universities” refers to academic positions for one year or more and does not include visiting scholar or visiting lecturer positions.
4. For government service, the analysis did not count years for summer work, fellow or visiting professor roles at universities, guest or visiting scholar positions at think tanks, or government committee positions.
5. Single-authored and jointly authored journal publications were credited if they were standard articles, symposium articles longer than two pages, and published or in press. Not counted were book reviews, commentaries, editor statements, replies, rejoinders, and introductions to symposia.
6. Forrester (1996) uses his set of 26 journals to determine which public administration schools are the most frequent contributors to the refereed public administration journals. In addition, Rodgers and Rodgers’ (2000) set of the top 26 journals used to rank public administration programs is used. The two lists are similar, with 24 journals appearing on both lists. However, *Canadian Public Administration* and *Human Relations* appear on Forrester’s list and not on the Rodgers and Rodgers list; *National Civic Review* and *The Public Manager* appear on the Rodgers and Rodgers list but not on the Forrester list. Therefore, in order to be comprehensive, researchers combined the lists and searched all CV for publications appearing in all 28 journals.
7. In counting single-authored and jointly authored books, edited or coedited volumes were not included. Also, reports, handbooks, and monographs were not eligible. Books were credited if the CV stated they were published or in press by U.S. publishers. Furthermore, multiple editions were counted only once.

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## Research Design

Because our intent was to survey the top scholars in the field, the first issue faced was determining who should be included in our sample. Rather than relying on our own subjective judgments or compiling the opinions of a broad-based sample of others in the field, we contacted the current president and the four most recent ex-presidents of five national public policy and public management professional organizations: the American Political Science Association, American Society for Public Administration, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and National Academy of Public Administration. For the American Political Science Association, we also surveyed the current and four ex-chairpersons of the Public Administration Division. For the National Academy of Public Administration, we also surveyed the chair and four ex-chairs of the membership nominating committees.

Each president and ex-president was asked to nominate at least 10 living scholars (but they were not limited to only 10) who they thought were most successful in the field of public administration and public management, broadly defined. With each nomination, we asked for, and received, a brief statement of the reasons why they considered those nominated scholars to be successful.

For this stage of the study we received sufficient cooperation from those contacted; nine of the 35 experts (25.7 percent) contacted responded to our request. The lists submitted by these experts resulted in the nomination of 89 different scholars. There were obviously numerous duplications in identified scholars. We feel quite confident that the resulting list constitutes the "creme de la creme" of the scholars in the field.

After pre-testing our survey and making adjustments to it, we then obtained addresses of each nominated scholar and in May 2001 mailed them a survey along with a cover letter that explained our project and requested that they complete the four-page survey and return it along with a copy of their current curriculum vitae (CV). After three weeks, we mailed a reminder letter if they had not already responded to our request. The survey elicited a 70.8 percent response rate (63 respondents of the 89 listed by the experts). Of the 63 scholars responding, 46 supplied a copy of their CV with their survey. In December 2001, 17 additional CVs were obtained—some from scholars who submitted a survey and some from scholars who did not submit a survey. Thus, a total of 63 CVs were reviewed.

The survey instrument included 59 questions with Likert-scale responses ranging from 1 (not important) to 7 (most important) plus a "not applicable" response. The survey questions were divided into seven category areas: education, research, publishing, academic work experience, nonacademic work experience, roles in professional organizations, and other strategies and behavior. (A complete copy of the survey instrument is available upon request.) In addition, each category included an open-ended question asking the respondent to provide other factors that contributed significantly to her or his success as a scholar. Finally, an open-ended question asked for advice for new public administration/public management scholars and students.

The summary results of the survey responses are shown in tables 1A, 1B, and 1C. The first set of columns shows the proportion of scholars (who replied to the question) who ranked the experience from "least important" (coded 1) to "most important" (coded 7). Since the seven-category ordinal ranking is a bit unwieldy, the next set of two columns shows the proportion of respondents who ranked the experience either 1 or 2 (of low importance) and the proportion who ranked the experience either 6 or 7 (of high importance). We also show for each experience the mean response (again excluding all "not applicable" responses) along with the rank of that mean among all the questions. That is, the number-one rank (held by "hard work") indicates this characteristic had the largest mean response. The final column of table 1 shows the proportion of respondents who replied to the question, that is, chose one of the items on the Likert scale. The findings are discussed in the following two sections of the article.

Since we promised respondents anonymity, we did not link the CVs to the individual surveys. The information contained in the CVs did, however, allow us to characterize many interesting characteristics of the leading scholars in the field. Furthermore, as shown in the sections with findings, it is often the responses to the open-ended questions that provide more individualized insight into the factors the scholars themselves state have been most important (or totally unimportant) to their professional success.