



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION**

1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005
(202) 628-8965 Fax: (202) 626-4978 E-mail: naspaa@naspaa.org
Website: <http://www.naspaa.org>

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The Honorable John Berry, Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Berry,

On behalf of NASPAA's Policy Issues Committee, I am pleased to present our new white paper, "Building the Federal Workforce for the 21st Century: Graduate Students and the Routes of Entry." This paper is the latest in a series of NASPAA efforts to consider and recommend policy options in federal hiring reform for students, based on an examination of the available evidence.

Over the last 18 months, we have appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss the need for reform in federal student hiring programs, especially the Presidential Management Fellowship. And we applaud the optimism and vision you have shown in bringing sorely needed change to these programs.

We now stand on the threshold of that change.

As we embark, we would once again like to emphasize the centrality of graduate students to achieving the goal of a more effective, productive federal workforce. As the white paper points out, graduate students face just as formidable a set of obstacles in seeking federal employment as undergraduates do, perhaps even more so. USAJOBS does not work for graduate students, especially those at the masters level. Recognizing that the *majority* of graduate students in recent years have been entering the federal government through the FCIP, there is an even more pressing need to provide a clear and compelling pathway for graduate students into the federal government now that the FCIP program is frozen.

If we do not replace the FCIP with a pathway that includes opportunities for graduate students, we will lose thousands of them every year from pursuing and securing federal employment. The PMF is an irreplaceably important vehicle for bringing outstanding graduate students into government. But it is appropriately small, and it is not enough.

Our 275 graduate schools of public administration, policy, and affairs are looking forward to a new era of opportunity for publicly spirited students across the country. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working with OPM and agencies across government

to implement changes to student internship and hiring programs. NASPAA can help create innovative and exciting marketing programs to students and provide needed logistical and academic support for assessment efforts and interviews.

For 32 years, NASPAA has partnered with the federal government to encourage the best graduate students to consider federal careers, and to ensure the road there is a rigorous but supportive one. Let's do it all over again.

Sincerely yours,

Laurel McFarland
NASPAA Executive Director