



SAPA NEWSLETTER

Section on African Public Administration
American Society for Public Administration
Issue 7 ~ March 2026



Message from Dr. Rym A. Kaki, SAPA Chair



Dear SAPA Members and Supporters:

With the official conclusion of my two terms as SAPA Chair on March 20, 2026, I find myself reflecting with immense pride and gratitude on how far we have come together since I assumed the Chair position in 2019, following the inaugural leadership of Dr. Peter Haruna. Here is a recap of six years of institutional advancement and legacy-building.

When we launched this associational academic journey in 2018, the Section on African Public Administration (SAPA) was still emerging – we were 28 foundational members at the time, a mix of U.S. and Africa-based public administration scholars, practitioners and students, with a shared goal of building a dedicated platform under the auspices of the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA), aspiring to bridge continents and spark meaningful dialogue about the most pressing challenges facing African public service systems. Today this dream stands tall. We have grown to a thriving, diverse community of 50+ members spanning both the U.S. and the African continent – each member bringing energy, ideas, and a deep commitment to public service and value.

Over the past years, SAPA has evolved from a budding initiative into a well-recognized and firmly established academic association. We have made our presence felt at ASPA annual conferences through our annual signature symposia – dynamic gatherings that explore current trends, challenges including opportunities for positive change in African public administration. These events have drawn together seasoned and emergent scholars, practitioners, policymakers, keynote speakers and students from across the U.S. and Africa, creating a vibrant exchange of perspectives that continues to shape our collective understanding of the foundational origins of African public administration and the future of public service on the continent.

SAPA's continental network of collaborative partnerships continues to expand. Our partnership with the *African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)* has paved the way for SAPA's first footprint on the continent. The collaboration with the *African Journal of Public Administration and Management (AJPAM)* further amplified our emergent impact on the continent, allowing SAPA to disseminate scholarship that bridges research and practice and highlights U.S., diasporic, and African voices in global public sector governance discourse. SAPA's collaboration with the American University of Cairo (AUC) yielded our inaugural continental conference. AUC and the setting in millennia-storied Cairo made 2023 a memorable year for SAPA...

Newsletter Contents: Chair's Message; Mission & Goals; Executive/Committee Leadership; 2026 SAPA Symposium; SAPA 2025 Symposium; 2025 Business Meeting; 2025-26 Fundraising Update; Member News; In Memoriam; Communicate, Connect & Collaborate.

...**Consistent and Targeted Fundraising** plays an essential role in helping an emergent association such as SAPA move from the 2019 fragile building stage to the more stable, well-anchored organization that it has become. When committed members facilitate a steady stream of donations from SAPA members and sponsors such as the University of North Texas/Dallas, they not only replenish SAPA coffers but also create predictable resources that allow the section to successfully organize annual symposia, continental conferences, annual networking events, support publications, communication, and superlative scholarship, including global outreach activities. A special accolade goes to the SAPA Fundraising Committee's former and current chairs, Dr *James Agbodzakey* and Dr. *Jean-Claude Ndongo* for supporting SAPA fundraising strategies and to Treasurer, Dr. *Bakry El Medni* for ensuring prudent stewardship of SAPA funds and budget.

Communicate, Connect and Collaborate with the Continent and the Outside World is the new direction of SAPA global outreach and communications as we elevate SAPA members' scholarship and professional accomplishments more outwardly and collectively signaling a desire to deepen intellectual engagement and dialogue, both in the US and on the continent. Moving forward the organizational energy must now shift toward deeper maturation, legacy-building, and positioning SAPA as an enduring force in the field of public administration, in the U.S., on the continent, and globally.

On March 20-24, 2026, we head out to Hollywood, California, to ponder the question of "Continuity and Change in African Public Administration - Building Bridges of Renewal and Resilience" as the continent faces profound changes due to continuing challenges posed by the accelerated adoptions of frontier technologies in public service, climate change, conflict, and democratic reversals. Dr *Brian Levy*, Professor of the Practice of International Development and Former Founding Academic Director of the Nelson School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and Mrs. *Terri Batch*, President of Batch Global Strategies and of Global LA will join us as keynote speakers.

In 2026, SAPA enters a new chapter with a leadership transition. I pledge my full support to the incoming leadership of Dr. *Gedeon Mudacumura* and his team as we set SAPA on a pathway of forward-looking initiatives on the national, continental, and global stages. Join me in wishing him, his executive team and the new Board members, good luck!

Lastly, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the ASPA Executive Team, William Shields and Karen Garrett, and the several ASPA presidents who respectively endorsed SAPA annual Symposia, Dr. *Susan Gooden*, Dr. *Kendra Stewart*, the late Dr. *Allan Rosenbaum*, Dr. *Patria DE LANCER JULNES* and Dr. *John Bartle*.



*Check [here](#) soon for Dr. Kaki's complete "Reflections on the Climb" letter to the SAPA community.

SAPA Mission & Goals

The American Society for Public Administration's (ASPA) Section on African Public Administration (SAPA) aims to advance the science, processes and art of public administration and governance on the African continent. It purports to foster opportunities for joint research and exchange between African Public Administration scholars and their international counterparts; provide systematic analysis, commentary, and articulation of on-the-ground plight of Africa's public service; play a leading role in advocating for diverse representation at all levels of government and promote the sense of ethical responsibility focusing on the exploration of professional, democratic, constitutional, and human values in public service. <https://thesapa.org/>



Executive/Committee Leadership Team

Officers: Rym Kaki (Chair); Gedeon M. Mudacumura (Vice Chair); Bakry Elmedni (Treasurer); Simone Martin-Howard (Secretary)

Advisory Board: Genevieve Meyers; Peter F. Haruna; Jessie Rose Mabutas; Oluwole Owoye; Deborah L. Trent; Atta Ceesay; Sombo Muzata; Bok Gyo Jeong; Aminata Sillah, Shin Kue Ryu, Mohamed Alaa Abel-Moneim, and James Agbodzakey

Academic Affairs Committee: Shin Kue Ryu (Chair) shinkueryu@isu.edu

Practitioners Capacity Building Committee: Adebayo Andari (Chair) -- adebayo.adanri@gmail.com

Marketing & Membership Committee: Atta Ceesay (Chair) – ceesayaa@buffalostate.edu

Communication, Newsletter & Website Committee: Peter Haruna & Debbie Trent (Co-Chairs) – pharuna@tamiu.edu, dtrent@civilstrategies.net

Fundraising Committee: Jean-Claude Mansanga Ndongo (Chair) – jndongo@odu.edu

Global Outreach Committee: Liza Van Jaarsveldt (Chair) -- Vjaarlc@unisa.ac.za

2026 SAPA SYMPOSIUM AT ASPA 2026 CONFERENCE



SAPA 2026 SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

**Continuity and Change in Public Administration:
Building a Bridge to Africa’s Futures**
Hollywood, CA | In-person | March 20, 2026 | 9:00AM to 6:00PM
Hancock Park Room | Loews Hollywood

SAPA’s upcoming annual symposium will feature two keynote speakers and three panels. Keynoting will be Ms. Terri L. Batch and Dr. Brian Levy. Ms. Batch is Founder & Principal of Batch Global Strategies (BGS) and President and CEO of Global LA. She was Senior International Trade Specialist with the U.S. Department of Commerce. Dr. Levy is Professor of the Practice of International Development at the University of California, Los Angeles and was the Founding Academic Director of the Nelson School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Panel 1 will be “Redefining the Concept of ‘Development’ for African Public Administration,” panel II explores “Public Service Delivery & Collaborative Governance in Disruptive Contexts,” and panel III scopes out “Public Administration in the Digital Governance Era.” The symposium will be followed in the same room by SAPA’s annual business meeting for all SAPA members. Highlights of the section’s first seven years, 2026 awards, and installation of new leadership are on tap. SAPA extends heartfelt thanks to the University of North Texas at Dallas as premiere sponsor of the symposium for the fourth consecutive year!

2025 SAPA SYMPOSIUM AT ASPA 2025 CONFERENCE



SAPA 2025 SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

**“Keeping African Public Servants in Public Service:
Unleashing the Power of People and Technology on the African Continent”
Washington, D.C. | The Mayflower Hotel | Senate Room |
March 28, 2025 | 9:00AM to 5:00 PM**

SAPA’s 2025 symposium was a diverse and rigorous convening of scholars, dignitaries, international analysts, and students, some who traveled from the continent. Opening remarks were offered by SAPA Chair Rym Kaki, ASPA President Patria De Lancer Julnes, and Symposium Committee Chair Shin Kue Ryu, followed by two keynoters: Dr. Chibamba Kanyama, Ambassador-Designate of Zambia to the U.S., and Dr. Daniel Ortega Nieto, Lead Governance Specialist and Program Manager, Public Sector Innovation and GovTech Program, The World Bank.



Left to Right: Dr. *Shin Kue Ryu*, Symposium Chair, Dr. *Daniel Ortega Nieto*, World Bank GovTech, Dr. Ambassador *Chibamba Kanyama*, and Dr. *Rym Kaki*, SAPA Chair.

Three panels were held: “African PA Professionalization in the AI Era – Human Capital, Leadership, and Public Service”; “Leapfrogging AI Powered Innovations for Service Delivery and Accountability”; and “African Current Regulatory Frameworks and Challenges in the AI Era.” SAPA was honored to host *Bob Mong*, then University of North Texas/Dallas president, and thank him and UNT/D in person for their third year as premier sponsor of the symposium!



ASPA President Patria De Lancer Julnes & SAPA Vice Chair Gedeon Mudacumura



Christopher Amrobo Enemuwe, Idaho State University

Dr. *Peter Haruna*, SAPA’s first Chair and current Communications Committee Co-Chair was a presenter on Panel I. Of the symposium overall, he recalls:

SAPA’s research presentations offered much food for thought across a variety of topics that gave me hope for the future. I was particularly impressed with the cutting-edge insights provided by our up-and-coming scholars. I look forward to this year’s SAPA symposium with more hope and optimism.



2025 Annual Business Meeting

SAPA’s 2025 annual business meeting followed the symposium, attended by approximately 20 SAPANs. Chair *Rym Kaki* led the meeting, presenting the board’s strategic plan. A key step was formation of the 2026 continental conference planning taskforce, being led by Dr. *Kaki* until

current Vice Chair Gedeon Mudacumura is sworn in at the next annual meeting. Dr. Kaki and Liza Van Jaarsveldt (taskforce Vice Chair) set priorities from identifying host institutions to coordination among SAPA committees and the host institution on theme, format, duration, cost, logistics, and post-conference evaluation.

Gedeon Mudacumura, Shin Kyu Rue, James Agbodzakey, Jean-Claude Ndong, and Amina Sillah reported on their committees' work in the past year and projected plans for the coming year. Treasurer Bakry el Medni observed that SAPA is among ASPA's most vibrant sections, with a healthy five-figure bank balance, part of which will be applied to the 2026 symposium and other efforts outlined in the current and upcoming Chairs' strategic plans. A celebratory highlight of the meeting was awarding James Agbodzakey the 2025 SAPA best member award for his fundraising accomplishments at the University of Texas/Dallas.

Dr. James Agbodzakey receives award from Dr. Gedeon Mudacumura



Dr. Jean-Claude Ndong bears good news and ideas

2025-26 Fundraising Update

The Fundraising Committee celebrates the financial health of SAPA, thanks to the donations and dues of members, as well as the generous contributions of partners and external stakeholders. We continue seeking donations to meet SAPA's mission "to advance the science, processes and art of public administration and governance on the African continent." Those interested in donating should please email the SAPA treasurer at [<sapaaspafrica@gmail.com>](mailto:sapaaspafrica@gmail.com).

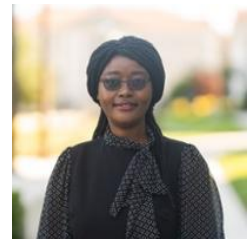


Member News

Harvey White encourages proposal submissions and attendance at the 14th Biennial Conference of the Consortium for International Management Policy and Development (CIMPAD) in Luanda, Angola, June 15-22, 2026. The conference is being held in partnership with the IC Council and the Angolan Ministry of External Affairs. “Pioneering Progress: Leveraging Education, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Transformative and Resilient Development” is the conference theme.



Sombo Muzata shares that a co-authored chapter – “Public Debt Crisis: Status and Implications in the SADC Region” – has been published in the 2025 book, *Public Finance Management in the Development Matrix of the Global South: A Social Inclusion Perspective*. As well, this July, she will be James Madison University’s host of the 4th Accountability in African Public Policy and Administration Conference, on "Advancing Multi-Stakeholder Synergies for Public Accountability and Integrity in Africa," at the U.S. International University in Nairobi, Kenya.



Jean-Claude Ndongo happily announces his recent appointment at Old Dominion University’s Graduate Certificate program in Public Procurement and Contract Management. He is teaching public procurement classes while working full-time for Palm Beach County's Procurement Department. The stars of his academic and practitioner careers are aligned!



In Memoriam

Laila El Baradei – SAPA’s esteemed Egyptian partner – died suddenly in Cairo, on April 18, 2025. Laila was a beloved professor at the American University in Cairo and was serving as Chair of public policy and administration in the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. About three weeks prior to her death, she presented a stimulating paper at the SAPA symposium, co-authored with **Rana Hendy** (AUC).



Laila, a scholar of the highest integrity, observed that 5,000 years ago, Egyptian leaders built governance infrastructure, trained scribes, and accomplished extensive socioeconomic development, all amid corruption and conflict. She held out hope that even though human behavior hasn’t changed, perhaps the rising generation of public sector leaders will apply AI and other technologies in better-governance efforts. Dr. El Baradei was certainly dedicated to that goal. Please find SAPA’s tribute to her, [here](#).

Communicate, Connect & Collaborate

The Communications Committee wishes you a productive and enjoyable ASPA conference this month. Peter Haruna offers the following thought piece for members and friends alike to consider during the proceedings and beyond...

**Making a Difference Globally, Nationally, and Locally through Interdisciplinarity:
The Role of the African Scholar**

Africa is at a crossroads. In addition to dealing with seismic climate change, technological, and demographic changes, the continent is facing a reversal in democratic gains. Amidst these challenges, what role should the African scholar play? Inspired by Afrofuturism, African scholars across disciplines seek to highlight unique ways of knowing, living, and meaning making, and to integrate them into development policy and practice. Here, we emphasize the role of the African public administration scholar given the field's interdisciplinary nature (Raadschelders, 2011). The traditional approach to public administration as both a discipline of study and a field of professional practice has not served Africa well. Complex and diffuse as the emerging issues and challenges are, public administration scholars must embrace interdisciplinarity and explore and excavate robust epistemological and methodological frameworks to confront them. Proposed initiatives, including Africa's Climate Change Initiative, Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa, and Africa's Continental Free Trade Agreement, are productively approached from an interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary perspective. Connecting, integrating, and aligning insights from traditional disciplines such as economics, politics, sociology, policy, public health, finance, and management helps develop grounded public-value-oriented solutions in public service. In sum, the African public administration scholar must shift research and teaching perspectives from a discipline-specific orientation toward innovative, interdisciplinary approach. The focus should be to develop fresh and useful insights for public service practitioners and policy makers. It is possible to do so without losing sight of the need for legitimacy, equity, and accountability in public institutions as many public sector innovation scholars have argued (see, Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2024).

References

Demircioglu, M. A. & Audretsch, D. B. (2024). *Public Sector Innovation*. Cambridge University Press.

Raadschelders, J. C. N. (2011). The Future of the Study of Public Administration: Embedding Research Object and Methodology in Epistemology and Ontology. *Public Administration Review* 6, 916-924.

Seehawer, M. (2018). Decolonizing Research in a Sub-Saharan African Context: Exploring Ubuntu as a Foundation for Research Methodology, Ethics, and Agenda. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 21 (4), 453-466.

~~~~~ **THANK YOU** ~~~~~

