

# FROM THE DEAN

## EMBRACING DIVERSITY

In recent years, the term “diversity” has come to be associated, almost exclusively, with our country’s racial and ethnic kaleidoscope. This is an important connotation, but it should not be the only one. In addition to exposing our students to this “traditional” concept of diversity, the LBJ School prepares them to deal with diversity in many other forms.

First, there is the diversity of career options that our graduates are confronted with. While all of our students are concerned about public policy and committed to service, they do not all choose to work in government. About 30 percent of our graduates take jobs in the private sector and another 20 percent join nonprofit organizations. We have adapted our curriculum to address these realities. For example, we have offered eight joint degrees, including the MBA/MPAff and Law/MPAff degrees, for a number of years, and we are developing a concentration in nonprofit management.

Second, there is the diversity of roles that professionals must be prepared to perform. Most of our graduates at first take staff positions in which they are expected to apply their analytic skills and policy-specific knowledge. At some point in their careers, however, virtually all professionals find that substantive expertise alone is not sufficient; in order to advance to the next level, they also need to know how to supervise, manage and motivate. We have developed a series of leadership courses that will help our graduates make the transition from expert, to manager, to executive.

Third, there is the diversity of political beliefs that our students hold and that our graduates must be prepared to deal with. One of our responsibilities as faculty members is to provide an environment in which a wide range of perspectives can be explored thoughtfully and respectfully. It is better to learn to deal with diverse beliefs here, in the relatively benign atmosphere of the classroom, than in the “real world.” If we fail to expose our students to a wide range of views, we will have failed to prepare the graduate.

Finally, there is individual diversity. Race, religion, gender and other demographic characteristics may tell us a bit about modal tendencies, but they do not tell us how a particular individual will react in a specific situation, or what he or she will find interesting. The last point is evident in the variety of topics covered in this edition of the *LBJ Journal*. Although all written by students interested in public affairs, these articles are both philosophical and practical in nature, they cover subjects ranging from high tech laws to the economics of those in need, and they examine issues that have an impact here in Texas and countries around the world.

This is the thirteenth edition of the *LBJ Journal*. It is a very high quality product, evidence of the quality of the training its authors have received and of the skills of its editors. I wish to give a special thank you to Senator Russ Feingold for his contribution.

Edwin Dorn

### LBJ JOURNAL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

*The Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs was established in 1970, fulfilling a long-held dream of President Johnson for an academic institution aimed specifically at preparing talented men and women for leadership positions in public service. The school offers a master’s degree in public affairs and a Ph.D. degree in public policy. For more information, write to the Office of Student and Alumni Programs, LBJ School of Public Affairs, Drawer Y, University Station, Austin, Texas 78713-8925, or visit the school’s web site at <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj>.*