PDP Communiqué

Getting It Done: The Challenge of Transition

Eugene J. Monaco,
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The New Year promises fundamental systems changes in New York State government. With the arrival of a new administration in the state capitol, change has become the operative word. There is a bold call for a more open, accessible, and transparent government where actions and individuals will be exposed to increased public scrutiny and challenges. There is also a growing expectation that the new administration will establish practices that respond to new ideas, demands, and needs. As Governor Spitzer stated, implementing these changes and resulting new policies will not be a simple matter. Success may well depend on understanding the complex nature of systems relationships that comprise the workings of state government.

The call for wide-ranging change is a tall order which will be subject to vigorous debate over the coming months both in and outside of Albany. Regardless of the outcome, things will be different. This raises the question of how public service careerists adapt to and manage far-reaching system transformation—embracing the new, while preserving the good that resulted from the old. How the new system looks, feels, and reacts to change will be the topic of spirited discussion. The result will or may be a series of complex new relationships at all levels of government.

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

The Changing Public Service and the Challenges of Lifelong Learning

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Several features of the changing nature of public service have been observed for some time now. Consider just four of them:

• The public service is experiencing significant turnover at the middle and senior ranks as the "baby boomers" retire.

• Information technology is having a major impact on the way work is organized in government.
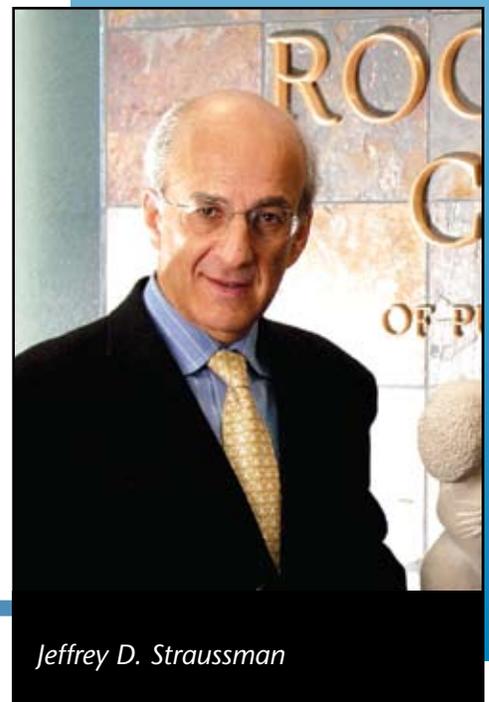
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Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor

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Jay Forrester at the MIT Sloan School of Management, one of the leading thinkers in the field of systems dynamics, has written extensively about how social systems in particular have a high degree of complexity with considerable influence over individual human behavior. In fact, individuals in social systems are not free agents, but essentially are responsive to the surroundings in which they find themselves. This will become more apparent as the Spitzer administration takes hold in Albany.

An inherent aspect of the social systems in which government operates is that they can become so complex and interdependent as to be counterproductive. A major challenge will be structuring decision-making processes that effectively leverage the practice wisdom of careerists to implement change. Getting this right is the key to success. New commissioners and executive teams now being assembled in every state agency will have a strong desire to bring with them a number of mid-level managers, some of whom may not be well-versed in political and bureaucratic intricacy. They will quickly be exposed to veteran public servants skilled and accustomed to entrenched ways of doing business. The result of these dynamic interactions will serve to magnify the structural complexity of the system. Realizing the best of what government can do requires understanding and managing complex relationships to support the ambitious agenda of the Spitzer administration. The next 100 days will be filled with myriad proposals, plans, and actions which will be quite interesting for those who follow and study government in transition. It will be equally interesting for those of us involved in dealing with the emerging continuing professional education needs of the public service that will result from this change in administration. It certainly gives renewed meaning to the Chinese proverb—"we live in interesting times."

News and Views

Foster Care Youth Leaders Speak Out!

Designed and implemented in collaboration with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and the NYS Adolescent Services Resource Network, Youth in Progress (YIP) is a youth-led education and reform initiative. YIP's top priorities include dispelling the negative stereotypes associated with youth in foster care, countering the widespread false beliefs that the general public has about the foster care system, and changing foster care practice. Youth Leaders have participated in and conducted many focus groups across the State and in 2006, the team began the steps to create an effective and sound legislative agenda.The Youth in Progress Team held a Summer Retreat at White Eagle Conference Center in Hamilton, New York. At this retreat, the team worked on developing a legislative agenda and met with representatives from the NYS Law Guardian Program and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

Youth Leaders seized their opportunity in October 2006 to present the mission and priorities of Youth In Progress to NYS Assembly and NYS Senate staff members.

Adoption Expo

On November 29, PDP sponsored an Adoption Expo at its new training center. During this event, the Capital Region Heart Gallery photographs and other information about area foster children in need of permanent adoptive homes were showcased. Staff from PDP's Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment project were on hand to answer questions and encourage the thirty-plus prospective adoptive parents who attended. Staff from several local districts and agencies who work directly with the youth were also available to provide child-specific information in order to match families with the needs of the children.

Hospital Emergency Response Exercise

With funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services Bioterrorism Training and Curriculum Development Program and in partnership with the University at Albany School of Public Health and the Columbia University School of Nursing, PDP's Instructional Technologies Unit staff is developing a game-like simulation to provide hospital-based clinicians with an opportunity to practice and test their knowledge and ability to respond to mass casualty emergencies. Learners will select from various scenarios that vary by the type of event and their staff role. Games and simulations are proven to engage and challenge learners in a very personal way. This project represents PDP's first use of gaming in an online product. The first module is expected to be completed and released by March 2007.

- The fluidity across the three sectors—public, private, and non-profit—is changing the nature of governance at all levels of government in the United States and elsewhere.

- Globalization is affecting so many facets of government not only at the international and national levels, but also at the state and local levels as well.

Think about some of the questions that are raised by the above statements. First, have governments at all levels prepared for the generational changes that are taking place before our very eyes? Some public employees in NYS often comment dryly that they can spend most of their days going to retirement parties and saying goodbye to civil servants who have spent three decades (or more) toiling in one of the state's executive branch agencies. Few would challenge the point that generational succession has been episodic at best or nonexistent at worse. Second, are we reaping the full potential from the technologi-cal advances in information produc-tion and retrieval which have had a tremendous impact on the way we organize government organizations and the delivery of services? While e-government applications are grow-ing, NYS is not at the cutting edge of IT applications that bring govern-ment closer to the people. Third, do our public servants fully appreciate the ramifications of "network gover-nance" when multiple organizations in and out of government collaborate in the development and delivery of services? To take just one dimension of this phenomenon—when services are financed by the government but delivered by another sector the issues of transparency and accountability are made more complicated in a myriad of ways. Fourth, do we appreciate how globalization influences so many of our challenges at the state and local level? Consider the issue of immigra-tion, a particularly sensitive topic these days that has produced no shortage of political opinions in our country. When we look at the experience of immigration in the State of New York we know that virtually every part of government is affected including, but not limited to, labor and employment, health care, education, and housing. Understanding immigration, as but one dimension of globalization, is now an important challenge for so many public servants in the state.

The four trends outlined above are not necessarily project specific train-ing and education programs that are prepared under contract for public sector customers. Rather, as I see it, they represent long term changes that are shaping the character of public institutions. So how would an organi-zation like PDP respond to the trends outlined? In my judgment they should be infused in current and future pro-grams where appropriate. After all, we are not only trying to impart specific knowledge and skills to our customers (although this is certainly an important part of the mission), we are also trying to position public servants to "read" the broad governmental landscape that will shape their work for years into the future. This is the challenge of lifelong learning.

All Staff Meeting

Attended by 140 staff, PDP held its annual All Staff Meeting on November 17. A full-day agenda included an update on University Research activity by Robert O. Webster, Associate Vice President for Research; Eugene J. Monaco's State of PDP presentation; introduction of new staff; updates on five PDP Strategic Initiatives; and presentation of annual service and recognition awards.

Robert O. Webster, Associate Vice President for Research, University at Albany

Extended Learning Leadership Award
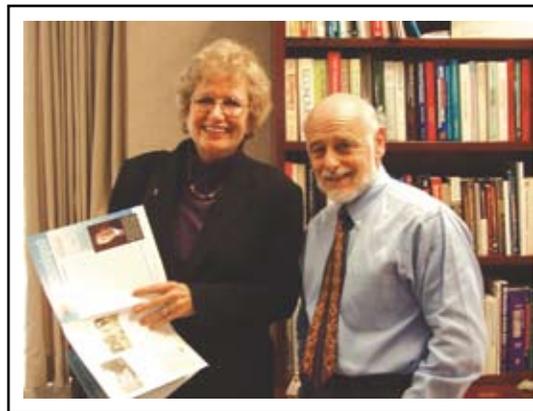
Pictured here with PDP Executive Director and Public Service Professor Eugene J. Monaco, Laurie DiPadova-Stocks, Dean of the Hauptmann School of Public Affairs at Park University, received the 2006 PDP Distinguished Extended Learning Leadership Award of Excellence on November 14. Made annually, the award recognizes outstanding contributions and sustained commitment to excellence and public engagement in the field of continuing professional education.

Complexity Science

George P. Richardson, Professor of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Informatics
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy

A group of faculty in the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy approach difficult problems in the public sector using computer-based tools created to study complex dynamic systems, including public policy systems. These researchers are themselves a part of the complex scholarly system that is becoming known as complexity science.

For an overview of complexity it is useful to think of three kinds: complex borders, complex structure, and complex behavior over time, or "dynamic complexity."

Benoît Mandelbrot focused in the 1970s on the beautiful mathematical reality of regions with extraordinarily complex borders. Structural complexity is more familiar to most of us. We are often agonizingly aware of just how complex an economic or political system is, how their myriad layers and crucial details rise up to challenge and often defeat analysis. The complexity of structure of the global climate system is much in the news, and with

good reason. Complex behavior over time is usually thought of as the more or less random ups and downs we see in economic time series, welfare roles, atmospheric temperature, and other things that we can observe in complex structures.

All of these examples from the new science of complexity share in common their reliance on high-speed computing to draw complex borders, assemble complex structure, or play out complex behavior over time. In addition, they share a common structural feature: they all involve iteration or information feedback.

Faculty and students in the Rockefeller College use computer-based tools to study public policy systems that are complex both in structure and behavior over time. They employ notions of complexity, particularly the property of mutual or circular causality (feedback), together with perspectives and insights from management and social science, to simulate complex public policy systems. Their work
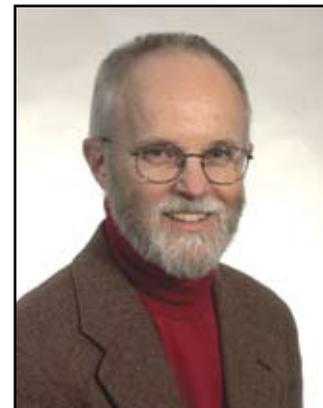
has included health care finance, NYS medical malpractice insurance policy, the dynamics of welfare system reform, the adequacy of modern safeguards against bank failures, cyber-security, the evolution of trust in multi-organization collaborations, and security on oil platforms in the North Sea during an operations transition. Student course work includes dynamics of various ecosystems, commodity cycles, urban growth, stagnation, and decay, and the dynamics of large-scale projects.

The Intricate Journey of Developing Audit Training

Working in a complex business environment takes a great deal of ingenuity, creativity and cooperation in order to get the job done. Team efforts to meet challenging expectations often drive quality and innovation as well.

A year ago, PDP was faced with creating a specialized training program for auditors in the social services field—a new topic and a new target audience. Although an auditor training program was already in place, there are special circumstances related to auditing in a social services context. The first task was to quickly become familiar with auditing social services organizations. Adding to the chal-

lenge, the training program had to be ready for roll-out in nine months.

Accustomed to quickly engaging unfamiliar territory, PDP enlisted the support and assistance of OTDA Audit and Quality Control and established a work group comprised of auditors from OTDA and PDP curriculum developers, and began the collaborative process of program development. PDP team members furnished the expertise in curriculum design and development as well as a strong background in public welfare organizations. Experienced auditors then contributed the specialized content. It was through this cooperative effort that the training

program was developed. PDP then partnered with the University at Albany for faculty expertise from the School of Business who now participates in most of the audit training and assists with continuing program development and re-design.

The PDP working partnership approach for addressing complex projects enabled a shared, participative solution to a complex challenge. The audit training program is another exemplar of PDP's ability to move effectively in developing customized learning solutions.

When Off the Shelf Training Isn't Good Enough: Resolving Complexity through Collaboration

Enacted in 1973 to enhance reporting of child abuse and maltreatment and provide a framework for intervention, the Child Protective Services Act established a Child Protective Service (CPS) in each county in New York and a telephone hotline, known as the State Central Register (SCR) for reporting. Available 24/7 and staffed by over 200 CPS professionals, the SCR handles over 140,000 reports/year involving over 236,000 children. SCR personnel are also responsible for processing requests for information as part of screening potential employees to work for schools, foster homes, and other child care agencies—some 6,000+ entities. This represents an extraordinarily complex network of citizens, agencies, organizations, and staff processing an enormous amount of information.

In 2003, NYS automated these procedures by creating the Advanced Integrated Management System (AIMS). AIMS was designed to process, track, and provide management data for all operations, eliminating the need for manual processing of paper records throughout the organization. The next step was a training strategy to implement the new system—an appreciable challenge given the level of the system's complexity.

Working with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Bureau of Training (BT), the SCR approached PDP's Computer Training Services (CTS) for custom design and delivery. Skilled at developing training applications for complex work environments, CTS established an inter-organizational project team to conduct a needs assessment, analyze system and program-related documents, determine business rules with respect to actual system functionality, develop realistic case scenarios, and draft a training design. This process involved collecting and analyzing AIMS sytem-related documents from OCFS IT staff and program-related documents from the SCR, and determining how AIMS interfaces with CONNECTIONS, a database system that supports child welfare program activity.

As the SCR is a 24/7 operation, the resulting training design, consisting of classroom sessions and hands-on workshops, had to take into account staff availability. In preparation for the training delivery, the PDP AIMS team developed curricula and quick reference guides, configured a training database, and communicated all activities with SCR staff and OCFS sponsors. AIMS training began in 2005 and concluded with all SCR staff being trained on current system functionality during 2006, marking the end of a project successfully developed and delivered on time and on target.

So what lies behind this success? The capacity to understand AIMS from organizational and user perspectives; the ability to identify and effectively manage participation by multiple stakeholders; skillful boundary-spanning; and capability in developing work-relevant learning solutions. AIMS is not the first such challenge. CTS has worked with BT to develop performance-based training for other proprietary systems including the Adult Services Automation Project and the Child Care Facility System. CTS has also worked extensively with the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Bureau of Training and Management Analysis, to develop and conduct training for numerous applications, including the Welfare-To-Work Caseload Management System and Welfare Reporting and Tracking System Summary Tables. Those too were successful projects. So what lies behind this success? Ultimately it is PDP's expertise dealing with complexity.

Did You Know?

- Finding, developing, and keeping talent are among the top concerns for human resource (HR) executives for 2007. Sixty-two percent said the most pressing strategic HR issues companies will face in 2007 fall into the realm of "talent management." *ORC Worldwide, January 2007*

- A significant proportion of the U.S. population—many born between 1978 and 1995 and known as Generation Y—will move overseas. It may be the first U.S. generation to have many of its members leave the country to pursue large portions of their lives, if not their entire lives, overseas. *World Future Society, December 2006*

- Organizations are increasingly concerned with return on investment in learning processes. Seventy-seven percent use reaction measures; thirty-six percent use learning evaluations; fifteen percent measure behavior change; and eight percent measure results. Expect increased emphasis on Kirkpatrick Levels 3 and 4. *Learning Resources Network, December 2006*

- Baby boomers are more likely to stay in the workforce longer and will be less likely to downsize than previous generations. Considering that boomers are healthier than their predecessors, and are more likely to work in an office setting, many of them may work five or ten years beyond the traditional retirement age of 65. Though most of those surveyed pointed to 70 as their retirement age, twenty-seven percent said they would never retire. *Harris Interactive, November 2006*

Open House at *PDP's* New Offices and Training Center

On October 2, PDP opened its new training center at its fourth floor offices in the University Administration Building on the University's uptown campus. The center consists of two state-of-the-art electronic classrooms and two seminar/breakout rooms. In welcoming visitors to a January 11 open house attended by representatives from some of PDP's major sponsors such as the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, and the Public Employees Federation, and over 100 colleagues from across the campus and state agencies, Executive Director Eugene J. Monaco noted, "This event marks a dual celebration—moving to our new space and thirty years of dedicated service providing continuing professional education for the public workforce." He went on to say that, "An added bonus in moving to UAB was the opportunity to build the center which has been a hit from day one. Since we opened the doors in October, the center has hosted 47 events and there are already 38 events scheduled for early 2007." To provide a sense of the scope of PDP activity, Monaco noted that, "During the past year, we conducted over 2,000 education and training events enrolling over 20,000 students." Looking to the year ahead, he announced that, "The state of PDP is also strong. We are projecting over $25 million in contracted training for 2007—close to a 10 percent increase over 2006."

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