

Dr. Victoria Gordon's professional background includes serving as a city clerk, a county-wide housing department director and as a city administrator. Her geographical location was part of the reason that she pursued her DPA at UIS, but as someone at a mid-career stage of life with a family, she also needed funding to pursue her education. UIS offered that opportunity through graduate assistantships, summer research funding and the Julia J. Henderson Scholarship. The third reason she was attracted to UIS was the guidance and mentorship offered by the female faculty in the program and at UIS. Dr. Beverly Bunch, Dr. Patricia Byrnes and Dr. Willa Bruce all contributed to Dr. Gordon's successful transition into the world of academia. Dean Glen Hahn-Cope was instrumental in securing a one-year visiting assistant professor position for her at Texas Tech University in Lubbock (2004/2005) which allowed her to gain much needed teaching experience before going out into the job market. Since 2005, Dr. Gordon has been a part of the MPA program in the Political Science Department of Western Kentucky University. She was promoted to full professor in August 2017.

As a former local government manager, Dr. Gordon's research interests are related to issues important to local government management. Over the years, her primary areas of research interest have and continue to be regional community and economic development, local government finance, and human resource management. She approaches these areas of research from an experienced practitioner perspective. These areas of research also complement her regular teaching. She says that it is important that students know she is pursuing research applicable to making a meaningful contribution to the field of public administration, and strives to ensure that her research has practical application.

For example, a conversation Dr. Gordon had in 2010 at an ASPA conference with a conference attendee led her to research maternity leave policies in higher education, and then write a book Maternity Leave: Policy and Practice (2013). This conversation involved a young woman not taking a maternity leave because she feared it might be "judged harshly" by her male colleagues. Similarly, in 2012 while conducting a research project for ICMA on the topic of municipal finance, Dr. Gordon heard mention of a concept "participatory budgeting" and that tiny mention led her to research the topic and eventually write a report funded by the IBM Center for the Business of Government. That report then led to the publication of a book entitled Participatory Budgeting in the United States: A Guide for Local Governments (2016).

Dr. Gordon serves as the president of her local ASPA chapter, the Metro Louisville Chapter. She states that the local chapter activities give her students the opportunity to network with other professionals and to present their original research. For Dr. Gordon, she states that her ASPA affiliation gives her a connection with other people who have the same passion for public service that she has—those who see public service as a calling. She states that she has made wonderful connections through research presented at ASPA conferences and by serving on panels with others who do research in the areas in which she is interested. Sometimes she "runs into" one her former UIS classmates at a professional conference. She stays in contact with (even if infrequently) with Drs. Do Lim Choi, Connie Walsh, Randy Miller, and John Phillips. Dr. Gordon attributes her research success also to one particular classmate at UIS. Dr. John Phillips has served as a valued mentor and sounding board. Dr. Gordon states that John is someone I can ask professional questions of when I don't think I can ask anyone else, and he gives it to me straight. That is what I hope I give to my mentees and students when they come to me for advice.

On a personal note, Dr. Gordon and her husband Gary make their home in Bowling Green, Kentucky, which is equidistant between their three children located in Columbus, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia; and St. Charles, Missouri. Dr. Gordon, aka GiGi, spends much of her summers visiting her four (soon to be seven) grandchildren.

Picture—Dr. Victoria Gordon, giving a talk on her book, Maternity Leave: Policy and Practice.