

The Pickett Fellowships:

Cultivating Effective Leaders in Criminal Justice

Today, D'Arcy Morgan, a former Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer and Vancouver (British Columbia) City Police officer, is developing a training and technical assistance program with his colleagues at the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. He took the position after earning his master in public administration (MPA) degree at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The master degree became possible because of NIJ's John B. Pickett Criminal Justice Policy and Management fellowship program.

At Harvard, Morgan pursued his ideal education—he took classes not only from the Kennedy School but also from Harvard's business and law schools and thus achieved a dual concentration in public financial management and leadership.

"I built an unbelievable network of colleagues—former fellows and Harvard students from both criminal justice and the business sector," Morgan says. "I studied with people who were identifying problems and actually solving them."

Morgan also says his degree has taken him to a higher level of performance. "I've become more tenacious and have the skills to implement my ideas in more sophisticated, systematic ways."

The John B. Pickett Fellowships in Criminal Justice Policy and Management provide assistance to

practitioners who are interested in attending a 1-year Mid-Career Master in Public Administration program at the Kennedy School. (See "Applying for the Mid-Career MasterProgram.") Students are required to select at least one course from each of the Kennedy School's core methodological areas: quantitative methods, public management, and politics/ leadership/ethics and can choose courses from selected other Harvard graduate and professional schools. In addition, Pickett fellows select courses in criminal justice policy.

Since 1992, when the fellowship program began, 16 master degree students have received fellowships, which were established to honor the memory of John B. Pickett, NIJ's first director of planning and management. Pickett attended one of the Kennedy School's executive programs and worked closely with the faculty and staff at the school's Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management to address issues on policing strategies. He was instrumental in establishing the Executive Session on Policing, a 7-year Kennedy School project. The fellowships encourage criminal justice professionals to continue Pickett's legacy of commitment to public service and criminal justice administration. NIJ also provides funds for a 3-week program at the Kennedy School for senior executives in State and local government.

When former Pickett fellows talk about their experiences at Harvard, they echo several recurring themes: The broad diversity of the student body gave them an expanded perspective on the problems in their field and a ready-made network of professional friends from around the world whom they can call upon to talk through a tough problem. The invigorating academic environment

stimulated their intellectual skills, sharpened their management skills, and enhanced their overall performance.

Frank Dwyer is a lieutenant with responsibility for special projects who works directly with New York City Police Commissioner Howard Safir. A former patrol officer, Dwyer was working for the New York City Police Department's Office of Management and Planning when he decided to return to school for his MPA to gain new analytical skills and learn fresh ways of looking at policing and community issues.

Dwyer received his degree from the Kennedy School in 1993. He says the fellowship offered him the opportunity to study with a diverse, stimulating group of people and to gain a better understanding of non-law enforcement professionals' perspectives on the role of police in government.

Today, when Dwyer confronts tough issues, he finds himself asking broader questions and considering a wider range of resources and models, from both inside and outside government, to resolve problems.

Margaret Poethig worked in a very intense, challenging environment at the Chicago Police Department before undertaking her MPA. She managed the Chicago Process Mapping Project, the lead pilot program of the Police Executive Research Forum's 21st Century Policing program. She also had been a member of Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy management team.

Poethig views her Kennedy School experience as a refreshing sabbatical. "I wanted to obtain a master's degree in a way that had the least negative impact on the course my career was taking," she says.

When she graduated in 1997 and returned to the Chicago Police Department, Poethig says she had “gained a better understanding of the different roles people play in government and of the necessary balance between career professionals, appointees, and publicly elected officials. Each has a necessary role, even though each may not share the same vision of an organization’s goals.”

Poethig is currently the Policing for Prevention Strategy coordinator for the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department. She helped to conceptualize the department’s new policing strategy and expects to tap into her Harvard contacts as the program progresses.

At the Iowa Department of Corrections, Patrick Coleman directed 10 prison-based substance abuse treatment programs and managed the Iowa Treatment Alternatives to Street Crimes program before completing his Mid-Career MPA in 1997. He credits his Pickett fellowship education with helping him to obtain a position as a resident practitioner at the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). He is currently BJA’s deputy director for policy and management.

Coleman says his career had reached the limits of his education and experience. “There’s only so much you can learn from trial and error,” he says. His Kennedy School education supplied what he needed to know about business and management strategies and practices.

Coleman said the Pickett fellowship allowed him not only the opportunity to obtain a master’s degree from an exceptional academic institution, but a chance to meet and learn from a rich variety of highly educated and experienced people, many of whom have remained his close colleagues. “Harvard University brings together people from all over the world—about half of the 260 people gathered

Applying for the Mid-Career Master Degree

To be selected for a Pickett fellowship, candidates must demonstrate the qualities of integrity, professionalism, and dedication to public service exemplified in John Pickett’s character and distinguished career. They must have the motivation and values to lead in their fields and to meet society’s need for excellence in government. In addition:

- Applicants must have an outstanding academic and professional record and be enrolled in or admitted to the Kennedy School of Government.
- Applicants should have at least 7 years of experience in law enforcement, corrections, courts, or other criminal justice professions.
- Preference is given to applicants who demonstrate a desire to continue in the field of criminal justice policy and management, although not necessarily in their current capacity.

NIJ supports one Mid-Career master degree tuition each year—either for one student or split among two or more students, depending on the pool of applicants. The Kennedy School manages the application and selection process.

The admissions process for entering the Mid-Career Master in Public Administration in fall 2000 begins in March 2000.

For information, contact:

Mid-Career Master in Public Administration
Enrollment Services

John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: 617-495-1152

NIJ also supports a 3-week executive education program at the Kennedy School—the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. This Program usually takes place in the summer, although a special session will be offered in January 2000. For information about the 3-week program, contact:

Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government
John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
79 John F. Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: 617-495-0652

in my class were from outside the United States,” says Coleman. “The group included people from the military and from private and non-profit organizations, as well as from public sectors at both the State and Federal levels.”

Before his Pickett fellowship, Coleman focused primarily on program details. Now his vision has expanded—he sees more clearly the essential interrelationships among the three branches of

government, the public sector, advocacy groups, and constituents at the grass-roots level, which must be considered when program decisions are made. “Someone has an interest in every move we make,” he says, “and the Pickett Fellowship helped me see that more clearly.”