“How can we build better support for our communities to thrive at an individual and collective level?” asks Carolyn Arcand, program director of the master of public administration (MPA) online program at UNH. “Public administration should support the caregivers of our society - anyone whose purpose enhances the overall community welfare. Creative leadership and public engagement can make this happen.”

Arcand began her career as an auditor with Deloitte & Touche and as a financial manager for startup organizations in Colorado and Maine. Despite her success, she yearned for something closer to her heart. The choice to enroll in a master’s degree program in public policy with the University of Southern Maine was a pivotal decision that set her feet on a new and satisfying career path.

Arcand holds a Bachelor of Science in accounting, entrepreneurship, and emerging enterprises from Syracuse University. She earned a master’s degree in public policy and management as well as a certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Southern Maine. As a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Boston, Arcand holds both a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in public policy.

The University of Southern Maine offered Arcand a staff position managing budgets for student government and all student campus organizations. Promoted to associate state director of the Maine Small Business Development Center at USM, she crafted policies, managed finances and collaborated on grant proposals. These experiences drew her to the public sector, lighting a fire to enroll in a Ph.D. program and explore the complexities of public policy, research and teaching.

Arcand has written numerous publications in the field but her strongest area of interest lies in the world of women’s lives, including topics such as higher education options for single mothers, the working conditions of domestic caregivers and women working in construction on the Big Dig in Boston.

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false news, politicized sources and social divisions as an opportunity to better understand the drivers behind these splintering forces."

An emphasis on experiential simulation projects allows students a direct learning experience by assuming the role of public and nonprofit managers. Eager to incorporate new workplace skills into course content, Arcand seeks new opportunities for students to share experiences, exchange resources and expand their professional networks, especially with MPA alumni.

Pragmatic about the current social and political environment, Arcand says, “in the age of digital governance, our students learn to collect and analyze data but they also explore ways to make multi-layered statistics accessible and understandable to the public. With the increasing erosion of confidence in government at all levels, leaders need to foster better communication and transparency. Encompassing multiple perspectives requires honesty and an active listening style so I encourage students to approach the plethora of false news, politicized sources and social divisions as an opportunity to better understand the drivers behind these splintering forces.”

Arcand believes that the art of online teaching has changed dramatically in recent years; new software, pedagogy and the pandemic-induced shift to remote classes have all accelerated the demand for a better student experience. She points out that students in asynchronous classes benefit from the inherent advantage of an online forum that offers more time to reflect on the material, formulate their questions and exchange ongoing views. A collaborative author of a chapter in Humanizing the Online Classroom, a book about revisioning and reconstructing higher education after global crises, her teaching style is based on empathy and respect for students accessing higher education remotely.

“The vibrant exchange between mid-career professionals sharing their hands-on experience with younger graduate students fosters a spontaneous environment of cross-teaching by peers,” says Arcand. “I am inspired by the success stories from alumni who cite the skills gained in our MPA program.”

In a program designed to meet the working professional’s need for flexibility, she notes that while students access their courses fully online, they also have the option to seek individualized support through virtual or face-to-face meetings with their UNH instructors.

On the personal side, Arcand loves running and hiking and she mentions the unique experience of walking the mountainous pathways of the famous Camino de Santiago trail in Spain. She serves as the family outings coordinator for the Maine Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club and points to the potential for alignment with public administrators in creating synergies with recreation management policies crafted to encourage public interaction with the outdoors.

Arcand openly embraces ideas for the future, sparkling with energy and enthusiasm in all her endeavors.
November 27, 2023 | CARSEY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
Citizen of the World

October 31, 2022 | RESEARCH
National Lab Day

November 29, 2023 | GRADUATE SCHOOL
Call to Action