

David Leininger, Managing Director, City of Irving, President 1972

Membership

The original Bylaws Committee

Issues

The issues in 1972-73 included actual formation of the organization, development of an initial membership base, development of a leadership base that was willing to take on roles of officers, development of some form of funding support to accommodate modest requirements, development of a program concept that would be sufficiently relevant to keep attention of membership.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

Beyond formation of the organization itself the most important achievement, in my mind, was the creation of the UMANT retreat, and securing grant funding support to make it possible and meaningful. The retreat was a powerful unifier and created a genuine opportunity for UMANT members to interact as peers, not subordinate of others. Moreover it proved to be an opportunity to attract City Managers to participate as resource professionals and mentors. Many within the profession were more than willing to be helpful.

Retreat

My best memory is convening the first one. Just getting it done was a source of accomplishment.

Advice for Future UMANT leaders

Keep the programming relevant, always focus on new members to replace those moving on in their career, produce an occasional written product (study, white paper, powerpoint presentation) to add value to the profession, remember that public service is a special calling and always be proud to be a participant in it.

Bob Blodgett, R.S. Wells LLC, Colorado, President 1977

Membership

I believe the other officers were Marion Morris (Vice-President) and Chuck Kirk (Secretary). At this time the membership was principally City of Dallas employees. Our challenge in the early years of the organization was broadening the membership base beyond Dallas into suburban communities.

UMANT mostly consisted of MPA's from big cities. It was a mixture of aspiring City Managers and those who did not want to go into City Management. The average member age was 20's or 30's. I don't recall the mix of single versus married, but everyone was fun-loving, enthusiastic, and wanted to get involved in city management issues to contribute and "make a difference". At the time, it was difficult to do this in TCMA or ICMA on a regular basis. UMANT provided a monthly opportunity for exposure to city managers and elected officials and committee work that allowed Assistants to be involved and "network" in ways that weren't possible for them in the other organizations.

Issues

As I recall, we began a regular monthly (or bi-monthly) newsletter in 1977 that the Management Services Office Secretary dutifully and loyally typed (the days before word processing) on our behalf. The transition to the NCTCOG for regular newsletter production was a few years off.

We made an effort to reach out to the suburbs for membership. I remember discussing the locations of meetings extensively to ensure that they were easily accessible to more than City of Dallas employees.

We organized the finances and records so that we could apply for nonprofit status as an organization, which I believe was attained in '77 or '78. I recall literally being handed the records of the organization in shoe boxes and file boxes at the beginning of the year. This had been adequate to date. As we started to grow in the late '70's, we tried to pull all of the first few years' records together.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

This had to be the "Future MPA Graduate Supply Analysis" or some such name for a study that Quincy Ollison and I for some reason agreed to take on. Jon McCarty worked on this project also.

In the 1970's, there was a perceived "glut" in the market for MPA graduates, e.g. there were many graduates who were unable to find employment with cities after graduation. UMANT agreed to conduct a study, through its Professional Development Committee, of this issue. This involved a survey of all of the graduate schools in the state and surrounding states regarding the number of graduates they anticipated in the next few years, as well as a survey of all the major cities in the State of Texas regarding how many MPA graduates they planned to hire in the next few years.

Of course, in our uncomplicated minds, we would then be able to draw conclusions as to the future viability of the MPA degree for the next decade and help guide the future career choices of college graduates throughout the state. Or, to the contrary, the survey would tell City Managers how many new Assistant or other positions they needed to create with an MPA degree as a minimum qualification.

Amazingly, we had numerous responses from both colleges and cities. After a long process of trying to analyze and organize the data, a report was finally published by TCMA as I recall in 1978 or 1979. This all culminated with Quincy and I and perhaps Jon being invited to make a presentation to the North Texas Chapter of ASPA (I believe) at their annual conference in 1978 or 1979. I distinctly recall the uncomfortable feeling as I was grilled by the numerous professorial types in the audience about the validity of our research findings (too many MPA graduates for the future market) and wondering how I ever got into this project in the first place.

I don't recall what happened to the study after that point. I think it kind of faded away. But, I left for the City of Lakewood, Colorado in late 1979, so it may have had a life after that.

Retreat

It was at Tanglewood on Texoma, which was the tradition throughout the '70's. We were too serious to think of adding golf or even a fun-run though. The fun event was a houseboat ride for everyone the second night of the conference. (And making sure that everyone returned on the houseboat as well.) We would also have late night parties by the pool, and yes, someone went in that year, but I can't recall who.

Dallas City Manager, George Schrader was our keynote speaker. I was honored he would come at my request. He was very supportive of UMANT and our participation throughout his years as Manager.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

I still read monthly newsletters. I am very impressed with the programs, organizations, and opportunities offered. The charitable fund raising activities are a nice addition also. Maintaining connections with City Managers, TCMA, and ICMA should always be important priorities, in my view. This maintains focus on future career and professional organization service opportunities.

Jan McCarty, President 1978

Membership

In 1978 the other UMANT officers were Bill Keffler (Vice President), and Linda Keithly (Secretary-Treasurer). Other active members included Bob Blodgett and Quincy Ollison.

Most of the members were "City Managers in Waiting", although an influx of members who aspired to be department managers did change the demographics enough to create change in the organization. Most members had their MPA's, with the exception of those who did not want to be City Managers.

The makeup of the membership seemed to depend largely on who the managers were in Dallas and Ft. Worth. When Dallas had managers who supported UMANT (Schrader, Anderson), there seemed to be more members from Dallas, and the same could be said of Ft. Worth.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

Although it did not happen while I was president, one event that stands out in my mind is when UMANT held its first July half-day seminar. Up until that time, much of the professional development efforts had been focused on retreat. The group decided to offer more frequent training opportunities and Quincy Ollison helped head up the effort to offer this half-day seminar. This seminar was so memorable because of the guest speaker; a member of the San Antonio City Council, Henry Cisneros. We had him to ourselves all afternoon and it was wonderful.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

UMANT has always been a good organization and I am hopeful it will continue to be. UMANT should continue to serve young professionals and provide them with networking opportunities; especially the opportunities to meet other young professionals like themselves. However, UMANT should also seek to allow its members exposure to City Managers and help keep its members aware of issues in municipal management.

Bill Keffler, City Manager, City of Richardson, President 1979

Membership

In 1979, other officers included Linda Keithly and Beth Slaymaker. Dan Johnson, Jon McCarty, Steve McCullough, Tom Hart, and John Anderson were also active participants. The membership seemed to be dominated by assistants from Dallas and Fort Worth (largely due to the support of George Schrader and Richard Knight).

Most of the members were on the City Management track. The participants from COG constituted the extent of non-municipal members. When Charlie Duckworth was City Manager in Garland, several people from that city got involved. Ron Ragland was one of them. A large number of UMANT leaders also came out of Arlington. Ross Calhoun was Manager then and was very supportive of UMANT. Most of the members had their MPA's and the University Liaison program was started about this time. Until then, the universities had remained fairly disengaged from the management organizations.

I think the average age was about the same as it is now. We had more members who were single and definitely fewer with children. I guess then it was mostly people who were fresh out of graduate school.

Issues

At this time, Leland Nelson was President of TCMA and he supported the proposal to make the at-large position on the TCMA board an Assistants position. TCMA was struggling with how to include the assistants to a greater extent without diluting the programs to the point that managers would lose interest in the organization. Since then, both UMANT and TCMA have faced similar issues in that there are more and more members who do not want to be City Managers because there are more and more jobs out there that make good sense for career public administrators.

COG provided our primary means of communication. Linda Keithly did a lot to improve our ability to communicate with members, primarily by making vast improvements to the newsletter. The use of COG to communicate to members set the precedent that eventually led to COG being named the official secretariat for UMANT.

The ICMA Steering Committee was established around 1981 and Assistants groups began to be recognized more by the senior organizations.

It was also at about this time that TCMA began to recognize Assistants on the board and offer professional development for assistants. Ultimately, there was a UMANT member on every standing TCMA committee. Leland Nelson was instrumental in making this happen. TCMA really was way ahead of ICMA in terms of establishing relationships with assistants.

Retreat

We went about planning retreat very differently then than UMANT does now. Instead of having a theme, we just invited ten city managers to come and once they accepted we let them speak about whatever they wanted to. It turned out to be a really good retreat.

I specifically remember retreats in Salado and at Texoma. I recall really memorable excursions on Tom Hart's boat. Retreat then emphasized social interaction among members and fewer families attended together. Retreats really encouraged candor among participants and great exposure to City Managers. Plus, most of UMANT's professional development programs were geared specifically to younger professionals.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

In the 1990 UMANT Special Report, I was quoted as saying, “I will never understand why any young assistant would not want to be active in a peer association such as UMANT—the friendships, contacts, and mutual benefits through these associations will last a lifetime. City management is unique in that we all benefit from each other's success and learn from each other's failures, without concerns for trade secrets and other competitive drawbacks.” I do not know exactly when I said that, but I still stand by the statement. UMANT leaders simply need to be sure that UMANT continues to be an organization where these things are true, and it will be successful.

Dan Johnson, Deputy City Manager, City of Richardson, President 1981

Membership

In 1981, Gary Jackson was Vice President and Nancy Primeaux was Secretary. Most of the members either had their MPA's or were working toward one. We were watching as our UMANT membership was moving towards the 300-member benchmark (full and associate levels). A strong surge of suburban growth established many new assistant positions. Larger cities had "Management Assistant Programs" and structured internship programs in the City Manager's Office. Newsletters were mailed monthly, and were composed on a drawing table board. New City Halls and major regional facility construction created great settings for meetings and programs.

Issues/Achievements/Memorable Moments

At that time UMANT was very active in hosting and supporting ICMA meetings related to the ICMA Assistants Steering Committee development process. UMANT was one of about 8 "Assistant Groups" across the U.S. - and was among the most active nationally. With Dallas City Manager George Schrader as incoming ICMA President, UMANT hosted in Dallas a group of the Assistants organization leadership from across the U.S. to request the creation of the Assistant Steering Committee for ICMA and to help with the drafting of ICMA's "Declaration of Ideals".

There was also a strong outreach effort in which UMANT tried to connect with assistants in other areas of Texas, especially to relocated UMANT members in the San Antonio area, to foster assistant groups in those areas. At that time there was also concern about UMANT's relationship with TCMA. We tried to strengthen that relationship wherever possible. Among other efforts was formalizing an At-Large TCMA Board position that would be focused on an Assistant.

Retreat

The UMANT Retreat was held at the Stagecoach Inn at Salado - allowing several of the San Antonio-based Assistants to be able to attend. The best-kept retreat secret was agreeing to shuttle our statewide/nationwide speakers to the conference from the airport in Austin - it gave a young professional great conversation time with a key leader of our profession - and a possible job opportunity! After a day of great conference speeches and clinics, the evening party was always a great blow-out event! The Retreat registration was where UMANT made it's budget revenue for the year!

Other

During this period, some notable work was done to sustain the start of the Leadership Transition Luncheon. A set of orientation binders were provided to the incoming officers and committee leadership. It was also around this time that we began to rely heavily on NCTCOG to be the organization's secretariat. NCTCOG Executive Director Bill Pitstick was a great supporter of UMANT. The membership roster attempted to become a P.C. database, as personal computers and dedicated word processors were making their way into the office setting! 5 1/4 inch floppy disks...Wordstar, Lotus 1-2-3!

Ron Ragland, President 1982

Membership

I feel honored to have been elected to serve as President of UMANT.

1982 was a special year because we were celebrating the 10th year anniversary of UMANT. We had a 10 Year Anniversary Celebration dinner in October called “Reflections of the Past...Thoughts of the Future”. Seven of the ten past presidents spoke at the dinner.

Issues

My focus as President was to establish better recognition of UMANT by TCMA and its members, and to promote a better understanding of women in the work place. Although UMANT was 10 years old there were still City Manager’s within the TCMA membership that were resistant to giving recognition to the lower level positions of interns and administrative assistants, and there were some who did not support UMANT. Also, although women were making their presence known in the urban work place, the career path of City Manager’s was still a male dominated career path, and there were still acts of subtle and not so subtle discrimination issues stirring within the urban work environment. According to statistics at that time 44% of the workforce was female yet only 1% worked in top jobs, only .3 to .5% made over \$25,000/year & women made only 59 cents to every man’s \$1. (These stats came from one of our guest speakers, Karen Perkins, Executive Director of the Tarrant County Woman’s Center.)

One other issue that I choose to address was the manner in which candidates for nomination and election to the officers of UMANT were handled. Up until this year the Past-Presidents would nominate one candidate per office for consideration for election as officers of UMANT. Among the membership there were rumblings of the need to be more open to the possibility of allowing nominations to come from the membership at large and for there to be more than one candidate per office. I was successful in getting the Past-Presidents to take input from the membership at large and to put forth more than one candidate for consideration for each office. I believe this was the first year that we had two women nominated for the position of President, with no male candidates. I believe Barbara Weinberg was the first woman to be elected to serve UMANT as President.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

Although all UMANT members were not members of TCMA, UMANT members represented about 25% of the TCMA membership. In 1982 we were very successful in enhancing the relationship between UMANT and TCMA. Bob Blodgett, Past-President of UMANT, and Assistant City Manager of Grand Prairie, was elected to the 1982-83 TCMA Board of Directors in the At-Large position representing assistant city managers and administrative assistants throughout the state.

For the first time, as a result of UMANT input, TCMA proposed in its 1982-83 Service Plan a number of new services geared to assistants including:

- Implementation of a “Young Professionals Forum” at the annual TCMA Conference.

- Incorporation of more job announcements for “assistants” openings in the monthly TCMA Newsletter.
- Update of statewide public service intern survey & development of guidelines for a model internship program.
- Design of a mentor program between city government assistants & graduate students.

For the first time TCMA offered UMANT members the opportunity to participate in a full day at their annual conference at a greatly reduced price and about 60 UMANT members took advantage of the opportunity. The conference morning began with a co-sponsored breakfast between UMANT & UMAST, with TCMA President-Elect, Jim Brown, and City Manager of Midland, as our guest speaker.

Recognizing that several UMANT committees parallel TCMA committees (for example both have a University Liaison Committee) the TCMA Board agreed to have the President-Elect include the “chairpersons” of each UMANT committee on the TCMA committees having similar missions.

Finally, during the monthly meeting in May, UMANT and the North Texas City Managers Association co-sponsored a meeting in Arlington. NTCMA was one of the most progressive sectors of City Managers not just in the state but in the nation and most were very supportive of UMANT early on.

Retreat

The Retreat Committee was chaired by Judy Kleypas, City of Dallas. UMANT held its annual Retreat entitled, “The Working City and Quality of Life Philosophies—Components—Issues”.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

My advice to UMANT members is to take full advantage of the UMANT network and meetings. Each forum provides not only an opportunity to learn something meaningful about the profession; it provides a forum for getting to know City Managers and Assistants throughout the metroplex. Get involved in serving on a committee. The more exposure you gain to other members the better. UMANT can and does provide an informal network that allows you to find out about openings of positions before they are advertised. It also lets you get to know City Managers and in turn allows them to get to know you. There is no doubt that by getting to know others through networking does in fact provide you an advantage to moving up in the profession.

Libby Lanzara, Human Resources Director, City of Fort Worth, President 1984

Membership

The other officers in 1984 included Allan Weegar (Vice President), Sara McDonald (Secretary-Treasurer), and Barb Weinberg (Immediate Past President). Also active at that time were Kim Nicholson, Susie Reyes, Kevin Maiman, David Eiseniohr, Larry Jordan, Martin Burrell, and Mervil! Johnson.

Most of the members at this time had their MPA's and were aspiring City Managers. We had fairly strong representation from both large and small cities. Most of us were in our twenties or thirties and we were called the "Young Professionals". We had married and unmarried members, but most of us had not yet had children. I remember this group as being bright, earnest, organized, and idealistic.

Issues

At this time, ICMA had just formed the Assistant Steering Committee and had begun communicating more with UMANT. It was also at this time that we began meeting with Bill Pitstick to discuss having the COG become the secretariat for UMANT. In February of 1984, UMANT and COG signed an initial letter of agreement toward that end. TCMA was held in Ft. Worth that year, making it possible for more UMANT members to be exposed to that organization.

Retreat

We held retreat at Lake Texoma and since there was discussion of forming the UMAST group, the South Texas contingent joined us for retreat. Ricky Childers, then of Lubbock, led that group.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

The group should take a look at California's successful "Senior Professional" annual event. Also, make efforts to keep members from feeling that it is time to "cycle out" of the organization and encourage them to at least maintain ties to UMANT even when they are unable to attend UMANT functions on a regular basis. For example, maintain a mailing list which includes past members (esp. officers) and current local City Managers.

Allan Weegar, City Manager, City of Hurst, President 1985

Membership

In 1985, UMANT officers included Larry Jordan (Vice President), Kim Nicholson (Secretary-Treasurer), and Libby Lanzara (Past President). Other members who were active at that time included: Dan Johnson, Bill Keffler, Tim Von Kennel, Richard Wiggins, and Linda Keithly.

The majority of the membership at that time either had their MPA's or were working toward one. This was a transition period and we started to see more members joining who worked in operating departments, rather than strictly the manager's office. Many of the members were still aspiring City Managers, but during this time we saw more participation from Assistants in City Departments whose interests and goals were in general management.

Prior to this time, Fort Worth and Dallas had a strong influence in the organization. Smaller cities started to participate, especially those in Tarrant County. The real issue was the make-up of the membership in terms of the percentage of members from Tarrant versus Dallas County. The organization had been geared more toward Dallas County, but this had started to change when Libby Lanzara was President.

Most of the members at this time were in their mid-twenties. Most members were single, but some of us were married. We were an athletic group and liked to play golf and volleyball. The group was very interested in socializing and there were several programs geared toward social networking, which included after-hour socials and meetings at popular clubs.

Issues

The issues facing UMANT have not changed that dramatically over the years. At that time, we were intent on gaining representation on the TCMA Board and participating more in TCMA. UMANT was gaining the respect of managers throughout the area and participation by smaller cities was increasing.

UMANT was in transition and one of our main goals was to strengthen the role of assistant organizations throughout Texas, especially UMAST and UMAWT. Pulling assistants together throughout Texas was a key priority. The debated issue was having a Statewide association versus maintaining individual organizations. It was UMANT's perspective NOT to have a Statewide association, but strengthen all the individual organizations and improve communication between them, including networking opportunities between each group's officers.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

This was the first year that we had an Assistants Summit in Austin, where the officers of all assistants organizations came together, met, and exchanged information and discussed "assistant" issues. This was quite an undertaking and it was successful in supporting all of the organizations.

This was also the year in which we finalized the agreement making COG the official secretariat for UMANT.

Retreat

The retreat was held in Tanglewood on Lake Texoma. The most memorable aspect of retreat was the socializing and networking. There was a lot of golf and the programs were excellent. The program dealt with future management issues and developing yourself as a manager.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

UMANT leadership needs to stay attuned to Management Issues and design programs around those areas. Maintaining and nurturing the relationship with TCMA and NTCMA is also very important because they are your biggest allies and supporters. Stay plugged in to the makeup of your membership and structure your educational and professional development programs around the needs of the membership. Diversify your programs and spread the locations throughout the membership area.

Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, President 1986

Membership

I believe Susie Reyes was the VP.

Issues

Attendance; professional affiliation/acceptance by NTCMA and TCMA

Achievements/Memorable Moments

Establishing two awards; one in honor of a member we lost (Joy Sansom) and the other named for the person I believe most responsible for the viability of the organization in the early years, Bill Pitstick.

Retreat

Great professional development opportunities!

Advice for Future UMANT leaders

Take the time to develop an action plan early in the year. Focus on implementing the plan.

Susie Reyes, Director of Fund Development, United Community Centers, Inc., President 1987

Membership

In 1987, our Secretary was Doris Micheaux, Vice President was Chris Taylor, Treasurer was Lori Zoet, and Rod Bremby was the Past President. Other involved members included: Mark Todd, Jamie Evans, Katie McCain, David Reedy, Dee Stewart, LaVema Mitchell, Dave Draz, Marty Wieder, Kim Nicholson, Phyllis Conrad, Helen Crowder, and Marc Elliott.

I would characterize the membership as a good cross between City Manager "wannabe's" and those dedicated to public administration in other capacities. There seemed to be an East/West rivalry (Dallas/Ft. Worth) but I remember a lot more "west" folks involved during 1987. The members at that time could be described as loyal, dedicated, innovative, and resourceful.

Issues

I'm not sure any of these were "firsts" for UMANT, but we did look at once per year membership payments in January, as well as an invoicing system (which was probably securely implemented in '88). I remember membership pins being an issue. The Assistants Exchange Program was developed and then implemented in 1988. It was also in 1987 that we established the position of historian.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

One was the retreat; another, the Assistants' Summit. The TCMA conference that year was particularly interesting because the three assistants groups presented their accomplishments and concerns to the TCMA board.

Retreat

The 1987 Retreat was held at Lake Murray and covered the topic of team building. Memorable components included presentations by the Chair of the Department of Public Administration at Kansas University, Frank Coy, Rick Harmon (TCMA), and Marti VanRavenswaay.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

I think my best advice is very basic advice - be true to yourself, be true to others, strive to make the best of any situation, and try not to be unhappy. Life's too short to be unhappy.

For 35 years UMANT has provided all of us a world of connection, support, innovativeness, leadership, education and professionalism and I wish for UMANT much success in their future endeavors. My advice for young professionals has not changed over the years – live your life with integrity, celebrate your successes and enjoy your public management career.

David Reedy, President 1988

Membership

In 1988, the other UMANT officers included Dave Draz (Vice President), Lori Zoet (Secretary), and Marty Wieder (Treasurer). Other active members included Karen Grady, Chris Taylor, Doris Micheaux, Steve Norwood, John Winchell, Jamie Evans, Dave Eubanks, Susie Reyes, and Mike Collins.

By that time there was a good cross section of urban professionals from several arenas. Both large and small cities were well represented in the membership and there was about a fifty-fifty mix of those who were aspiring city managers and those who weren't. Most of the members were in their mid to late twenties.

Issues

While I was involved with UMANT we dealt with several important changes in the program. One was the move to involve the UMAST and UMAWT groups in the retreat. Another was the implementation of the Assistants Exchange Program. We developed a membership recruiting poster inviting young people to "Plug Into Your Future". We also made strides by establishing tax-exempt status for the organization.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

The most memorable part was working with a great executive committee and presiding over a great organization of young professionals.

Retreat

Retreat was in Lakeway, near Austin and the theme was "Tomorrow in Texas". The most memorable part of retreat was the Riverboat Cruise we took.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Be patient; listen to the membership and don't be afraid to err.

Dave Draz, City Planner, City of Dayton, President 1989

Membership

UMANT to me was always an enthusiastic group of great young professionals who worked hard and played hard! I'll bet it's the same today.

Issues

The one thing I do remember off the top of my head was a very heated debate about whether or not we should have membership pins and how they should be paid for. (From this vantage point it seems funny, but at the time it was pretty intense!)

Retreat

I remember really great retreats in Oklahoma and Austin. (We took a lot of heat from City Managers in Texas when we decided to go to Oklahoma! But, hey, they offered the best deal.)

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

I did not appreciate the true value of my experience with UMANT until I got further into my career. There are indeed many immediate benefits, but like a good education, the value and meaning of your UMANT experience will be realized when you need it the most.

Karen Daly (Grady), Assistant City Manager, City of Sugar Land, President 1990

Membership

In 1990, the UMANT officers were: John Winchell (Vice President), Barbara Bankston (Secretary), and Teresa Carreon (Treasurer). The activity level at the time was very high. We had excellent representation from Ft. Worth as well as Dallas and many other area cities. Kent Austin, Catherine Tuck, Steve Norwood, Marty Wieder, Mike Collins, Kim Nicholson, Mike Webb, Mike Stranger, Ann Born, David Reedy, and Dave Draz all had committee leadership.

The membership at the time can best be characterized as people with less than seven years of experience working as assistants or analysts either in the City Manager's Office or other city departments. The average age was under thirty and there was a mix of those married and single but few had started families. Most of the assistants were aspiring toward becoming city managers and many of them had relocated to the Metroplex during internships while working on their Masters degrees.

Issues

I had the pleasure of serving during a time when we began to look at the concepts of coordinating with the emerging assistants groups in other parts of Texas. We established a state presidents' annual meeting. We also worked on researching and clarifying our tax-exempt status.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

In 1990, the ICMA conference was held in Ft. Worth. We were able to negotiate an Assistants day rate for the conference so our members could attend at least part of the conference. That was a first for ICMA and they have continued the tradition ever since. We also conducted the first national Assistants Exchange program for seven assistants who came in one day before the conference. They were matched with an area city and learned about issues being addressed in Texas. This program also continues at the ICMA conference. We spent a good deal of energy "selling" the energy and capabilities of the Texas Assistants groups to ICMA.

Retreat

The retreat that year held in San Antonio on the Riverwalk. The major topic was Labor Issues of the 90's. The "three river rule" was invented!

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Future leaders of UMANT should always position the organization "on the cutting edge". City managers often look to this group to track trends or identify emerging municipal issues. UMANT should be known for looking at issues BEFORE they are discussed at other conferences and regional meetings. UMANT's strength and reputation is a great vantage point to help launch city management careers.

John Winchell, President 1991

I regret that I will be unable to attend this celebration. However, I continue to support UMANT through my membership and through encouragement of others to participate in UMANT. Thank you again, and good luck with the event.

Kent Austin, Director of Finance, University Park, President 1992

Membership

Most of the members were MPA's from mid-size and small cities. We were fairly evenly split between aspiring and non-aspiring city managers. Most of us were in our mid-twenties.

Committees included professional development, membership, retreat, university liaison, and probably a couple others. My main membership challenge was getting the committee chairs to attend the executive board meetings! I tried bribing them once by buying the first round at the post-meeting happy hour and that seemed to help. I don't recall the membership headcount but I want to say 200-250.

Issues/Achievements/Memorable Moments

Three issues stand out – first was the ill-fated attempt to promote a TML publication called “Texas Government Today.” It was a four-to-six page newsletter intended to be used in junior high grades as a teaching tool about TX local government. The president of TCMA at the time asked UMANT, UMAWT, and UMAST to help promote it. UMANT was the only one that agreed, and I attended some meetings of educators and tried to hawk the newsletter. Sadly it was I must say a rather dull product and nobody seemed too interested. It died a quiet death.

Next was the 20th anniversary celebration/dinner. This was a nice dinner held out at Grapevine's convention center. We had some early UMANT presidents attend and speak. Entrees were London broil and filet of sole if I remember correctly.

Finally was the continuing debate over what type of table skirt to purchase for use at UMANT tables at different events. I have no idea how this one turned out.

Retreat

Retreat was at Tanglewood on Lake Texoma. The most memorable component of retreat was probably the President's speech (No, I'm kidding). We did not lose money, so I consider it a success.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Stay active in UMANT and other organizations. Continue to read and learn from others. Look for opportunities to be a presenter at conferences. Remember that work is a creative undertaking and that you are building a legacy.

Shana Yelverton (Rice), City Manager, Southlake, President 1994

Membership

Other officers in 1994 included Trey Yelverton (Vice President), Modesto Mundo (Treasurer), and Paul Stevens (Secretary). The Committee Co-Chairs that year were hardworking and creative! They included: Christine LeBlanc and Michelle Melton (Retreat); Anne Borne and Kelli Dickerson (University Liaison); Grant Albright and Sam Scatterwhite (Golf Tournament); Donna Starling and David Tesmer (Membership); Trey Yelverton, Renee Tatterson, and Mitch McCasland (Newsletter); and Veronica Oglesby and Vesta Spitsnaugle (Professional Development).

Countless other members participated in the strong committee structure we had that year, and a number of UMANT members contributed by writing the "Assistants Word" articles or coordinating programs in their cities.

In my opinion, UMANT has evolved over the years to become an organization with broad appeal to young professionals in public management. I truly believe that those who aspire to be city managers still comprise the majority of the active membership, however, the program topics, newsletter, and other membership benefits extend to those who aren't necessarily interested in being a city manager.

Active members seem to be individuals who wish to be leaders and who are interested in working through UMANT to develop and sharpen their leadership skills. Additionally, UMANT provides excellent networking opportunities. I think we are all mindful of this as we make decisions about the level of participation we plan to offer to the organization. In my case, participation in UMANT had a number of benefits to me on a personal and professional level—giving back to the organization was, in a sense, a means of helping myself.

In general, I believe the membership of UMANT is comprised of young "up and corners" such as students or young professionals just starting out in the field.

Issues

One of the issues we were dealing with was credibility with the membership. As such, we conducted a customer satisfaction survey during the early part of the year and developed goals and objectives to try to meet the challenges posed by the membership in the survey. We made several important strides with UMANT that year.

One was an improved newsletter. As one of the most important benefits received by the membership, we allocated more resources to the newsletter, making it more visually appealing (color printing, photos, new masthead), and we established a strict production schedule to ensure that it was received in a timely fashion. We also offered the first Women in Public Management Workshop, which focused specifically on issues affecting women in the profession. This was a highly successful program, with over 60 participants! 1994 was the first year the UMANT golf tournament was hosted as a charity event. The tournament attracted 140 golfers and raised \$2,500 for a local chapter of the American Red Cross.

In 1994 we also initiated a Peer Mentorship Program. Approximately 20 matches were made in the inaugural year. Some of the matches resulted in long-term professional relationships. I'm still in touch

with my "peer"! In an related effort, we incorporated a Peer Exchange Panel Into the Retreat Agenda. UMANT, UMAST, and UMAVVT members volunteered to make presentations about their own programs or initiatives during the retreat. (By the way, 83 people attended the retreat!) Another important stride was made as we initiated discussions with TCMA regarding ways to strengthen the relationship between the assistants groups and the TCMA board. We requested that a member representing the assistants groups be placed on the board as an "ex officio" member. The result was that UMANT and the other assistant group presidents are now provided with a copy of the board packet and are invited and welcomed to attend TCMA board meetings.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

I am very proud of the year we had in 1994. I personally was very satisfied with the results of the "Women in Public Management" workshop. We worked hard on the program, recruited excellent speakers, and had an excellent turnout.

We had such strong committee co-chairs that each and every event we planned was well executed and attended!

Retreat

The retreat was held at Lakeway Inn, Austin and featured programs on emergency management, citizen participation programs, presentation skills, managing labor issues, and career advice. It was also the first year a "peer exchange" was incorporated into the agenda. About 83 people attended.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

UMANT has become a sacred institution. Do not take your responsibilities lightly! You are the leaders who will carry the torch forward and ensure that UMANT remains a strong, important, and credible organization. When you determine that you will participate, do so with energy and creativity. UMANT will benefit as an organization, but you will as well, since you will be able to develop leadership skills that will serve you throughout your career.

Trey Yelverton, Deputy City Manager, City of Arlington, President 1995

Membership

- Vice President: Paul Stevens
- Treasurer: Michelle Mellon
- Secretary: Christine LeBlanc

Issues

During my tenure, the golf tournament began to make money, and there were discussions on what to do with the funds. We decided to create a scholarship program with the funds. Also during my tenure, there were issues with the newsletter ranging from problems with the printer to concerns with the design of the newsletter.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

- Created scholarship fund to assist students utilizing golf tournament proceeds
- Redesigned the newsletter using innovative technology to improve the quality

Retreat

I met my wife, Shana, at one of the retreats at Lake Texoma.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

It is what you put into it. UMANT is great for building networks of people to bounce ideas off, and to learn from as you progress through your career. I still work with and utilize those contacts that I met through UMANT. The opportunities are also multi-level as they are not just peer-to-peer. You have the ability to interact with city managers and those at higher levels to glean information from them. My advice would be to proactively engage with others, attend events and functions to get to know people, and try to avoid being a wallflower.

Paul Stevens, City Manager, City of Waxahachie, President 1996

Membership

The other members who were officers in 1996 included Michelle Thames (Vice President), Christine LeBlanc (Treasurer), and Veronica Rolen (Secretary). Also active at that time were Jerry Tweedy, Lisa McMillan, Shelli Siemer, Kevin Hugman, Margaret Somereve, Jay Chapa, and Felix Marquez.

Since I first joined UMANT in 1989, the membership has seemed to change. When I first became active, most of the members were single and on the city management track. As the years went by, several members got married and had children. Professionally, there seemed to be more members that weren't necessarily planning on becoming city managers, but were planning long-term careers in city government.

I think there are several reasons for this change. First, the people who held Assistant to City Manager and Administrative Assistant positions were staying in those positions longer. Second, there were new opportunities opening up in municipal government such as recycling coordinators, economic development professionals, public information officers, etc. These positions seemed to be a natural fit into UMANT. Third, a bunch of us just got old.

Throughout this period of change, one thing remained constant: the dedication UMANT members had for the profession and the organization.

Issues

One of the biggest discussions with the Executive Committee was the possibility of having the Statewide Assistants Retreat at South Padre Island. "Was it too far to travel?" "Would City Managers and other supervisors think it was too extravagant and not let their assistants attend?" We finally decided it was not too far and city managers and supervisors would not have a problem sending assistants to Padre. The retreat turned out to be a real success.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

What I will remember the most are the officers and committee co-chairs. It was an excellent group of people that worked together very well. We always had lively discussions about the direction of UMANT and the programs we offered.

Retreat

Since I accepted a City Administrator position during the middle of my term and had to resign, I did not make the retreat that was held at South Padre Island. Since I did not attend, I have to reflect on previous retreats, all of which are very memorable.

The one retreat that stands out to me was the second retreat I attended. It was in 1992 and was held at Lake Texoma. Since the retreat was held at a somewhat secluded resort, all of the attendees stayed on site. Previous retreats had been in larger cities and once the sessions were over, everyone scattered and there wasn't the opportunity for meeting people.

The Texoma retreat had us all together during the entire retreat and it gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better and make some real friendships. Some people made better friends than others. Out of that retreat, two marriages resulted. Trey Yelverton and Shana Rice got married as did Jim Green and Christine LeBlanc.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Always remember that virtually all of the City Managers in the North Central Texas area are very supportive of UMANT and are willing to provide assistance, not only to the organization, but to individual members as well.

UMANT has an excellent reputation as one of the best assistants groups in the nation. I have also heard several North Texas City Management Association (NTCMA) members speak of the quality programming and services offered by UMANT.

I recently attended a University of North Texas Student-Alumni meeting for the Public Administration Department. As we were discussing programming for the upcoming year, several people (non-UMANT members), talking about the programs offered by UMANT and how good they were. Several of the committee chairs were designing their programs based on what UMANT had done.

The best advice I can give to the future leaders is to stay committed to UMANT and the profession. If you do that, everything will be just fine.

Michelle Thames, Assistant City Manager, City of Richardson, President 1997

Membership

Officers:

Michelle Thames – President
Jerry L. Tweedy – Vice President
Margaret Somereve - Treasurer
Lisa S. McMillan - Secretary
Paul Stevens - Past President

Professional Development Co-Chairs:

Ted Chinn
Kathy Carlton

Membership Co-Chairs:

Jay Chapa
Shelli Siemer

Retreat Co-Chairs:

Francine Ayers
Andrew Eads

Community Service Co-Chairs:

David Cardenas
Renee Tatterson

University Relations Co-Chairs:

Martin Bakal
Veronica Rolen

Accomplishments/Memorable Moments

The members of the Executive Committee and volunteers serving on the various committees were incredible and fun professionals. Each of them effectively applied their individually great skills and knowledge towards exceptional UMANT programs and services. We started the year off with a bang with a Nuts and Bolts Workshop in January quickly followed by a February trip to Austin for “UMANT Day at the Legislature”. This special event gave us a unique opportunity to watch the state legislature in action and Representative Fred Hill gave us special insights as a tenured member of the legislature in the capitol dining room. Following this strong start, we continued with a fantastic year of professional development opportunities, stretching our minds and enhancing our knowledge of local government within the region. Among our professional development programs were educational and insightful tours of DFW Airport, the Dallas Elm Fork Water Treatment Plant, the Fort Worth International Center, the Texas Motor Speedway as well as key sessions on the “ABC’s of Budgeting” and Geographic Information Systems. Along the way we took some time out for networking, community service and fun through our New Member Reception, Golf Tournament, and the Statewide Assistants Retreat. New members were

added, \$2,100 were raised for the scholarship fund at the golf tournament of 88 players and nearly 100 assistants throughout the state attended the retreat. In December, we ended the year much like we began, with another big event – our 25th Anniversary Banquet. Throughout 1997, a tremendous amount of time and energy was devoted to capturing and preserving UMANT’s rich 25 year history. It was exciting to see many former members and leaders at the banquet for a time of reflection and celebration. With such an active year, I’d remiss in not recognizing the tremendous support and encouragement I received from Bill Keffler and Dan Johnson (both Past Presidents too!) throughout my active involvement with UMANT.

Issues:

As an Executive Committee, we were never lacking in items to debate but the issues that come to mind now (ten years later) are . . . the seemingly never ending discussions about retreat location and who should host the retreat (UMANT or another assistant group), our efforts to get as many cities as possible to support participation in UMANT among their assistants, and the need to reinforce the importance of making participation in the inner-workings of UMANT enjoyable since we often went about our business so seriously!

Retreat:

UMAST/UMAWT/UMANT/UMACT/UMPSET Retreat
“Year 2000: Is Your City Ready”
South Harbor Resort, League City, TX
October 22 - 24, 1997

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders:

Participate as much as you can in all that UMANT has to offer. The experience is invaluable and the connections you will make through UMANT will last a career and then some!

Jerry Tweedy, Director, MAXIMUS Inc., President 1998

Membership

The membership in the mid-1990's was comprised of a mixture of individuals pursuing jobs as a City Manager and another contingent of individuals who were pursuing specialization in areas such as finance, budgeting, human resources and economic development.

Issues

During the mid-1990's, UMANT was expanding and diversifying from a membership focused almost exclusively on City Management to a membership that had long term interests in other areas of public sector management. This diversification forced UMANT to expand programming from the traditional city management focus toward areas such as financial management, environmental concerns, and alternate career development.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Future leaders of UMANT should seek and promote development opportunities for all members. It is critical that the leaders of today continue the process of developing tomorrow's local government managers. The training opportunities should be forward thinking, relevant and from varying view points.

Shelli Siemer, Assistant City Manager, City of Allen, President 1999

The following was taken from the December 1999 President's Message:

“It is with great pride that I look back on UMANT’s accomplishments for 1999. This year’s Executive Committee focused our goals around UMANT’s rich history by building upon the direction set by previous UMANT leadership. The overriding goals for UMANT included increasing the membership base, refocusing the organization on leadership development by involving members in UMANT’s committee structure, strengthening the affiliation with City Managers, and improving the organization’s financial status. All of the programs and events this year lead to an increase in the membership base, and improved financial status.

UMANT’s success is dependent upon the commitment and dedication of those who take on a leadership role in the organization. This year 22 members participated as committee members and 15 members participated on the Executive Committee. Some highlights of the organization’s accomplishments are as follows”:

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – Co-chairs: Mario Canizares, Thom Moton, and Mark Fadden

Committee: Leah Adams, Ternisa Hutchinson, Karen Richardson, Willie Watson

- UMANT membership increased to 213 members, which is a 29% increase from last year’s total membership.
- Membership fees totaled \$7,365, which is \$1,665 over anticipated membership dues
- Membership directory was enhanced to provide members with a RESOURCE directory

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Co-chairs: Lisa McMillan, Melisa Leal

Committee: Jennifer Carmack, Gloria Lopez-Carter, Scott Welmaker, Ted Chinn, Karen Richardson, Michelle Smithen, Valerie Bradley

- Professional Development committee approached the year with two primary goals in mind, increased programming and diversification in the programs offered, including the management series and the learning series
- UMANT offered 16 professional development programs with approximately 314 individuals attending the programs

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE- Co-chairs: Jennifer Hibbs, Shanna Sims

Committee: Jeff Jones, Chris Boyd, Stephen Quirk, Karen Richardson, Lori Segura

- For the first time ever, the Statewide Assistants Conference was held in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The City of Fort Worth hosted the annual conference.
- There were approximately 60 attendees with 13 sessions offered and 34 speakers.
- The conference had a positive financial result with a total balance of \$5,537. This is the first time in three years that the conference has been financially beneficial.

GOLF TOURNAMENT/COMM. SERVICE COMMITTEE - Co-chairs: David Morgan, Scott Campbell

Committee: Janet Birkenbile, Shawna Cortez, Jeff Jones, John Eaglen, Sarah Smaardyk,

Nora Wittstruck

- First year to host a joint NTCMA/UMANT golf tournament
- Tournament raised a total of \$2,062 toward the UMANT Scholarship fund

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE – Chairperson Bob Winchester

Committee: Cliff Keheley, Jr., Jack Thompson, Jennifer Wright

- Sponsored a successful one-day conference on Community Relations. The interactive program was well planned and executed.
- Coordinated two UMANT surveys during the year to obtain input from members on UMANT's direction.

OFFICERS - Sheri Campbell-Husband-Secretary; Bill Shipp-Treasurer; Jennifer Howry-Vice President contributed a great deal to this year's UMANT accomplishments. The monthly newsletter continues to improve with this year's inclusion of the monthly city manager's column entitled *From the desk of*. Most importantly, the financial status of UMANT improved from a beginning balance of \$3600 to an ending balance of \$7,800. Additionally, the UMANT scholarship fund grew \$1,100 and now has an ending balance of \$9,900.

TEAMWORK truly paid off. It has been an honor to serve as the 1999 UMANT President, it is an experience that I will cherish and hold close to my heart.

Jennifer Fadden, Assistant City Manager, City of Weatherford, President 2000

Membership

We had about 200 members in UMANT in 2000. The membership was made up of mostly assistants, but we also had several city managers and deputy city managers that were active and actively supported the organization and its mission. The UMANT Executive Officers in 2000 were: Jennifer (Howry) Fadden, President, Sheri Campbell-Husband, Vice-President, Mario Canizares, Treasurer, and Jeff Jones, Secretary. The participation level was very high, and we had a very broad geographic representation, including members from not only the immediate Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, but also outlying cities like Dublin, Lockhart, Corsicana, Jacksboro, and Cleburne.

We had a very strong Executive Committee of 14 members in 2000, and another 18 members participated on committees, but several people put forth a ton of effort to make the organization successful in 2000. I recall that Ted Chinn (Mesquite) and Nora Wittstruck (Richardson at the time, now Moody's) pulled off a fantastic golf tournament with NTCMA, earning over \$10,000 for the UMANT Scholar Fund. Steve Evans (Arlington) and Jack Thompson (Burlison) put together a great series of professional development programs that year; Lisa McMillan (Tarrant County) and Thom Moton (Corsicana at the time, now Greenville, NC), organized a one-day conference on Smart Growth; and Valerie Bradley (Southlake at the time, now Mesquite) and Karen Richardson (NCTCOG) organized a very successful conference with over 65 attendees in Corpus Christi. Finally, David Morgan (Richardson), Bill Shipp (Addison at the time, now Commerce), and Shanna Simms (Carrollton at the time, now Addison), reorganized the membership database, reintroduced new member packets, published a membership directory, and hosted a UMANT reception at each of the university MPA programs.

Issues

The Executive Committee in 2000 focused their goals around UMANT's rich history by building upon the direction set by previous UMANT leadership. Those goals included increasing UMANT membership; refocusing the organization on leadership development by involving all levels of members in UMANT committees; strengthening UMANT's affiliation with city managers; and improving the organization's financial status.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

I appointed a Task Force on Experienced Assistants when I was president to help determine how UMANT could better serve some of its experienced members and how the organization could better retain members beyond the traditional period of active membership. The task force was made up of all Assistant City Managers and former UMANT officers, including Paul Stevens, Chris Terry, Michelle Thames, Shana Yelverton, and Trey Yelverton. They looked at the issue of the professional development needs of current and former members who had advanced beyond the entry to the mid-management stage of their careers. The primary recommendation out of the task force was for UMANT to continue to fill the niche that it carved out 28 years earlier—keep offering quality professional development targeted to its primary membership audience and plug in the more experienced assistants as program

presenters and mentors.

Retreat

The conference co-chair in 2000, Karen Richardson, broke her foot in two places trying to catch her plane to go to the conference. She still made it—on crutches—and fulfilled her conference responsibilities with grace and professionalism.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Stay connected—those in the profession know and understand what we deal with on a daily basis in public service. Maintain those relationships, and rely on them for advice and counsel, as you never know when you are going to need it. In addition, take good care of UMANT's financial health—35 years of past leaders are relying on you for it!

Sheri Campbell- Husband, Director of Neighborhood Services, City of Burleson, President 2001

Membership

- In 1997 I was asked to chair the committee to plan UMANT's 25th Anniversary Banquet
- I was first on the Executive Committee as a Conference Co-chair in 1998.
- Was elected as Secretary (to fill an unexpired term) in 1998
- Served a full year as Secretary in 1999
- Served as Vice President in 2000 and President in 2001

Issues/Achievements/Memorable Moments

In 1998, UMANT still hosted what was called a "retreat" annually. But the other Texas assistants' groups had long been invited/included, and some assistants had trouble getting funding to go to what employers perceived as more of a party than a professional development venture. So we changed the name of the event to the Statewide Assistants Conference and formalized an agreement between all of the assistants' groups for everyone to play a formal role in planning the conference.

In 1998-99 UMANT went through a ROUGH bylaw revision process that I think all EC members from that time will remember both vividly and differently. Things certainly were kept lively during that period and I think it made for some healthy growth, both of the individuals and the organization.

During my time on EC, we continued to search for ways to keep members active after they "graduated" out of EC/officer roles in the organization. This may be something the organization struggles with forever, but I hope we started the ball rolling by creation of the Lifetime membership category, which encourages long-term membership in and support of the organization.

One of the things of which I am proudest is the step the EC took in the year I was president to name UMANT's annual scholarship for Bill Pitstick. The recognition of his support and stature in the profession was well deserved, and I'm VERY pleased that we got it done while he was still alive and able to appreciate the gesture. I still hear from his family how much it meant to him and still means to them that the scholarship bears his name.

Retreat/Conference

Honestly, I remember conference from the year I was conference co-chair a LOT better than from the year I was president. I do know the conference BOTH years was in Austin. And in 2001, I think I remember freezing to death in a golf cart with Mark Israelson during our pre-conference golf outing. I also believe Mirinda McQuagge was one of the conference co-chairs that year and I recall her being more than a little stressed out (understandably).

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Enjoy your time in UMANT for all that it REALLY is. It is a time for learning, networking,

socializing (not the same thing), absorbing the occupational culture, and networking some more. While what you will learn and the people you'll meet in UMANT will be important *to* you and *for* you, don't become so consumed by the minutiae of administering the organization that you don't thoroughly enjoy your time with your fellow UMANT members. You'll never get that time back once it's gone.

Other

My time in UMANT has given me some of the greatest memories and friends of my whole career in public management. It has also given me the opportunities for some of my proudest moments...and my most stupidly prideful ones. To those who were part of those shining successes, my thanks for your contributions. To those who were part of my less-than-stellar moments, my thanks for your patience and (I hope) forgiveness.

Mario Canizares, Assistant City Manager, Town of Addison, President 2002

Membership

Officers:

Mario Canizares, President
Jeff Jones, Vice-President
David Morgan, Treasurer
Valerie Bradley, Secretary
Sheri Campbell-Husband, Past President

Executive Committee:

Jason Little, Conference Committee
Marisol Trevizo, Conference Committee
Mark Israelson, Membership
Eric Olmedo, Scholarship Committee
Mirenda McQuagge, Special Projects

Issues

In 2002, UMANT celebrated its 30th anniversary as an organization. The issues that we faced in 2002 were very similar to the previous 29 and now the following years toward our 35th anniversary. We continued to debate on how to drive membership, increase participation at the professional development programs and annual conference, and lastly where UMANT needed to position itself on its philosophy of being an organization that focuses on developing future city managers or city management in the broader sense.

One of the goals of the Executive Board that year was to increase leadership participation in UMANT through adding an additional committee chairperson to the Annual Conference and Golf/Scholarship Committees. The Board also wanted to mix in members to manage these committees that had not had not been in that capacity before. As president, I was responsible for asking, no I mean begging people to join and run a committee. Fortunately, most everyone accepted my request and we were off and running the organization.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

That year we also began the outsourcing of the UMANT website. UMANT had a website for some time, but it needed constant maintenance and upkeep and it was decided that we would be better off placing that responsibility to an outside provider. In 2002 the city of Dallas hosted the Statewide Assistants Conference. It was one of the highest attended conferences since we were able to draw a number of our members that would otherwise not have the ability to travel out of town. Overall, we had a great year, UMANT was solid financially, the Golf Tournament was successful and we were able to maintain the scholarship at \$1,000 and still add to the scholarship fund, the annual conference paid for itself and we added a little reserve for future conferences, and we added members and grew future leaders.

My most memorable moment was attending one of our first Executive Committee meetings and looking around the room and seeing “the Old Timers” and “the New Kids” and thinking that this is a great bunch of people that will continue to lead this organization further and further for the betterment of city management. I think that Mr. Pitstick would have been proud.

Jeff Jones, Assistant City Manager, City of Hurst, President 2003

Membership

Officers:

Jeff Jones – President
David Morgan- Vice
President
Valerie Bradley-Treasure
Eric Olmedo-Secretary

Committee Chairs:

Mindi Hurley
Pamela Rambo-Estill
Marisol Trevizo

Scholarship:

Paulette Hartman
Lori De La Cruz
Jason Little

Professional Development:

Anna Fuller
Carol Griffith
Keisha Ward

Conference:

Karen Herrmann
Mark Israelson

Special Projects:

Mirenda McQuagge
Dawn Linzie

Issues

UMANT began to shift to more electronic communication venues. A notable change was the transition from hardcopy monthly newsletters to an electronic copy that was emailed to members and friends of UMANT. We also improved UMANT's new website to help market the organization's programs and member services.

UMANT continued to knock down common misconceptions that the organization is only for aspiring city managers by building a broad membership across departmental lines. The city management profession continued to present a strong influence, but membership continued to diversify at all levels of local government. Our 2003 executive committee was a perfect illustration of this significant progression.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

First and foremost, I want to publicly recognize each of the executive committee members for all of their hard work. They were the driving force behind all of the programs and accomplishments in 2003, and I was truly honored to be able to serve along side them. I also want to acknowledge the support of Hurst City Manager Allan Weegar and the encouragement of Shanna Sims, Jennifer Hibbs and Sheri Campbell-Husband, who were instrumental to my involvement in UMANT.

The Professional Development Committee organized some exceptional programs in 2003. UMANT also reached out and collaborated with groups we had not previously worked with such as the local American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) chapter and Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA).

In addition, UMANT collaborated with the Urban Management Assistants of West Texas (UMAWT) and held the annual statewide conference in Lubbock, TX. It was the first time the assistants group met in west Texas.

A significant memory that stands out from 2003 was honoring Mr. Bill Pitstick, who had recently passed away. The respect of Bill's friends, family and peers in city management was apparent by the \$10,000 that was donated to the UMANT scholarship fund which is named in his honor. Another memorable moment was having Mike Conduff speak at the year end banquet held in Grapevine. Mike is one of numerous city managers who continue to be strong supporters of UMANT.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Get involved and stay involved!

Relish and take advantage of the opportunity UMANT provides to network and grow personally and professionally. Many people you will meet will become life-long friends and part of your peer network throughout your career.

David Morgan, Assistant City Manager, City of Richardson, President 2004

Membership:

In 2004, there was a great executive committee that included Valerie Bradley as Vice President, Eric Olmedo as Treasurer, and Jason Little as Secretary. Other members on the executive committee were Jeff Jones, Amy Steitle, Pam Rambo-Estill, Carol Griffith, Kathleen Coats, Skip Krueger, Mirinda McQuagge-Walden, Ann Fuller, Keisha Ward, Alonzo Peterson, Karin Hermann, Mark Israelson, and Marty Harrison. The activities carried out during the year included the One Day Conference at UTA that focused on successful partnerships in government. The Statewide Assistants Conference was held in Galveston. Other program topics in 2004 included managed competition, capital finance, emotional intelligence, and mentoring.

Achievements/Memorable Moments:

The two biggest firsts for UMANT in 2004 was the new website and the addition of an assistant position on the TCMA board. In 2004, we were struggling to keep the website updated and user friendly. In previous years we used volunteers to keep our website running. In an effort to broaden UMANT's web presence, we contracted with Blue Marble Media to host, design, and maintain the website. During 2004, TCMA decided to allow their members to consider a constitutional change that would establish an additional board position reserved for a representative from a statewide assistant's organization. UMANT, along with other assistant's groups, encouraged members to approve the constitutional amendment. We were successful and saw the first assistant added to the TCMA board.

Advise for Future UMANT Leaders:

Don't lose site of why UMANT is an important organization in the Metroplex. When training dollars can be limited, UMANT is a great opportunity for assistants to broaden their exposure to local government and develop networks and friendships that will last a lifetime. UMANT serves assistants at a critical time in their career. Partnerships with other organizations are important, but UMANT should not lose sight of the unique way it serves its members.

Valerie Bradley, Budget & Management Analyst, City of Mesquite, President 2005

Membership

The other UMANT members who served as officers in 2005 were Eric Olmedo (Vice President), Jason Little (Treasurer) and Pam Rambo-Estill (Secretary). Erin Kasal pulled double-duty by serving as both a Scholarship and Conference Co-chair. The remaining co-chair positions were held by Amy Steitle and Mark Israelson (Membership); Mirenda McQuagge-Walden and Melissa Valadez (Professional Development); James Childers, Kacey Bess and Stephen Seidel (Special Projects); and Jared Wilson (Scholarship). Marisol Treviso, Crispin Lawson and Richard Abernathy each served a portion of the year as Conference Co-chairs.

Issues

As we started the year, we were focused on getting many of the newer members involved in the leadership of UMANT. To that end, about half of the co-chairs that served on the executive committee had not been appointed as co-chairs in previous years. I believe this generated new interest in the management of the club and resulted in contested races for the 2006 officers. In addition to the new leaders, we saw 29 assistants join our organization. I believe the appearance of these fresh faces provide additional perspectives and even facilitated some of the innovative changes being implemented today.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

What stands out the most for me about the group my year as President was the resiliency of the Executive Committee members. Even with several of the co-chairs needing to leave their posts due to job changes and life circumstances, the remaining team held together and accomplished all of the goals we originally set out to achieve.

Retreat

The conference was held in San Antonio and the theme was Celebrating Public Service. About 60 people from 20 different cities spent two and a half days networking and attending conference sessions. We all also enjoyed a specially guided boat tour of the Riverwalk given by the City of San Antonio Parks staff. Some of us even rode Segway Personal Transporters as a group downtown (unfortunately there is a picture floating around of us all sporting “stylish” safety headgear).

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

I would encourage future leaders to stay in touch with members’ needs so that UMANT remains relevant for many generations to come. Secondly, I would encourage upcoming executive committees to continue to foster the long standing relationships that UMANT has with both NTCMA and TCMA. Providing direct connections between assistants and local city managers will always be an important part of an emerging leader’s development. Lastly, be sure to cultivate the friendships made while participating in UMANT. Whether it is to provide an answer on a best-practices survey, to give advice regarding a tough workplace situation or to offer a new professional opportunity, colleagues will always be a valuable asset to any public administrator.

**Eric Olmedo, Financial Services Manager, City of High Point, NC,
President 2006**

Membership

- Vice President: Jason Little
- Treasurer: Pam Rambo-Estill
- Secretary: Erin Kasal

Issues

We worked on similar challenges as previous UMANT groups before us including the recruitment of new members and maintaining current memberships. A main goal of ours was to focus on establishing partnerships with area Universities. We also wanted to establish and maintain a cooperative collaboration with, and have a voice in, TCMA.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

I served as the Assistants' Organizations Representative on the TCMA board and oversaw a change in membership survey questions. Memorable moments included casting votes during TCMA board meetings, one of which turned out to be a vote in opposition of other member's votes.

Retreat

At the retreat, I enjoyed the ability to meet and talk with some well respected leaders who could provide valuable insight on public service.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Network, get involved, and get to know people. UMANT has given me much more than I have given it.

Jason Little, City Administrator, City of Melissa, President 2007

Membership

UMANT's membership was made up of many hungry young professionals who were ready to make their mark in public service. They were passionate and felt validated by the work they were doing. I think of them as a peer group where many people had the same wants in their careers and as members that wanted to make a difference. While members had a variety of different talents, at the core they all had the same desire to work and move up in the public sector.

Issues

Two prominent issues were retaining members over time and how to get the most value from UMANT's conference. Having people who devoted a lot of time and energy who would reach a certain point in their careers and move towards these other organizations meant that one of the big challenges UMANT faced was maintaining continuity and institutional knowledge. Another issue that UMANT faced was how to try and get the most value out of a conference for its members when public organizations were not investing as much in training after September 11th. There were some significant overlaps between what different conferences offered for professional development and UMANT could not match the networking opportunities that were offered at the conferences of bigger organizations.

Achievements/ Memorable Moments

I'm most proud of transitioning UMANT into its next phase of development, which is still going on. We took the idea that everything in UMANT was preset and started to explore if there was a better way that it could function for its members. Taking what we had experienced and learned, we start to refine what was not working so well and start redefining how UMANT was going to serve its members. One example of these is how we took an idea that made sense, hosting a social event at the 2007 TCMA conference, and began to take that forward.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

Make it a priority to get out of the office when you can. The hardest thing to do is sustain the commitment to be involved with UMANT. You'll find that when you make time to give an hour of your time regularly, the time you put in pays you back many times over. Through UMANT you can build a support network of people with a variety of expertise and experiences that you can turn to for advice, bounce ideas off of and help you take the next step in your career. Peer relationships and friendships that develop will stay with you.

Pamela Rambo-Estill, Senior Management Analyst, City of Arlington, President 2007

Membership

In the fall of 2006 Jason Little was elected President and I was elected Vice-President for 2007. Jason was offered the opportunity to be the City Administrator of Melissa, Texas shortly after that. I became President after his resignation when no one else submitted their name for the replacement election. Other 2007 UMANT officers were: Erin Rinehart (Vice President), Miranda McQuagge-Walden (Treasurer) and E.A. Hoppe (Secretary) who were selected by the 2008 EC after my placement as President and confirmed by the general membership with a vote of confidence at the very well attended first 2007 UMANT event, Nuts and Bolts, in January. UMANT members were drawn from a diverse pool across North Texas, and included individuals both starting and continuing careers in local government, students, corporate members who worked closely with local governments, emerging leaders and next generation professionals, as well as longtime city managers. Representation spanned across the Metroplex. A unique change in 2007 was that UMANT also began serving as the assistant's organization for folks as far away as Lubbock and College Station, places in the State where there were local government professionals needing an organization to be linked with but no regional assistants' group present to provide that. UMANT stepped up to the plate. It's also the year that UMANT expanded its membership category to include "Friends of UMANT" a designation targeted specifically to senior professionals who likely weren't the right audience for some of UMANT's services, like professional development or scholarships, but were big supporters of the organization and wanted to show their support of the emerging leaders and next generation professionals that are the heart of UMANT.

Issues

UMANT focused in 2007 on expanding its role of facilitating networks by creating a UMANT Networking Opportunities (UNO) committee to help connect members to other local government professionals and their organizations. The charter UNO committee co-chairs, who also named the committee, were Christal Kliewer and Sereniah Breland who both did a fantastic job. Networking became so popular and successful, NTCMA partnered with UMANT for the second year in a row to hold a joint networking mixer for the two organizations. The Pitstick Scholarship became endowed in 2007, and UMANT began looking at ways to offer scholarship money to its members both academically and for professional development in other areas. UMANT also saw the successful selection of our very deserving nominee to TCMA for the Gary Gwen Mentoring Award (which was the UMANT Joy Sansom winner from the previous years) for the third consecutive year.

Achievements/Memorable Moments

2007 saw UMANT join with two other assistants' groups to hold the first assistants' hosted reception at the TCMA Conference in San Antonio. The event was so well attended, (more than 4 times what was expected) drink tickets were gone 15 minutes into the evening and it was so crowded you could hardly move. I think it's safe to say we were all very proud of this event, and we couldn't have been successful without the strong support of TCMA President Mark McDaniel. UMANT offered its first scholarships to members to attend the TCMA Annual

Conference (6 scholarships), and was invited by the President of TCMA to participate in an Assistants Roundtable to strengthen the partnership between TCMA and the regional assistants' groups.

Retreat

Deciding with the other two active assistants' groups in Texas, UMANT decided to promote TCMA Annual Conference attendance for members rather than holding a separate State-wide Assistants Conference in 2007. I still don't know if it was a good idea or not to forgo our own State-wide Assistants Conference. I know the membership has mixed feelings about it, some think it was the right thing to do, and others don't. I hope I won't go down in the record books as the President who "undid" a great UMANT tradition by not having State-wide in 2007. And I also hope that future UAMNT leaders will have the fortitude to bring back the Assistants' conference if they find a void has been created by not having it. Only time will tell (but I'll be watching). After a successful reception at TCMA, UMANT is looking to have an even greater role in future TCMA conferences.

Advice for Future UMANT Leaders

The biggest piece of advice I have is to get involved and stay involved with UMANT. Even when you think you may have "out grown" UMANT, remember how important this organization is to you now and continue to support those who come after us. Also, make as many friends and acquaintances as possible. It seems to me this profession is kind of like a family, and at the end of the day, we all need somebody who understands to support us.