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Who Are the Keepers of the Code? Articulating and Upholding Ethical Standards in the Field of Public Administration

Establishing a code of ethics has been a challenge in public administration. Ethics is central to the practice of administration, but the broad field of public administration has had difficulty articulating clear and meaningful standards of behavior and developing a means of upholding a code of ethics. Although a number of specialized professional associations in public service adopted codes, starting with the International City/County Management Association in 1924 and others after 1960, the full range of public administrators did not have an association to represent them until the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) was founded in 1939. Despite early calls for a code of ethics in ASPA, the first code was adopted in 1984, with revisions in 1994, but neither code had a process for enforcement. A new code approved in 2013 builds on the earlier codes and increases the prospects for ASPA to work with other professional associations to broaden awareness of the ethical responsibilities to society of all public administrators.

It has long been recognized that ethics is integral to public administration. Although ethical behavior is not always achieved at the individual or organizational level, it is obvious that an essential element of administration is missing when unethical behavior occurs. Still, establishing clear and meaningful standards to guide behavior has been difficult for the practitioners and scholars who make up the field. Although specialized groups of administrators that organized themselves as professional associations developed codes of ethics, starting with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) 90 years ago, the profession more generally, as represented by a diverse membership association such as the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), was slow in adopting a code of ethics. This article examines the shifting attitudes about codes of ethics in public administration and the progression of ASPA's code of ethics as a study of the challenges of developing a set of enforceable standards for a large and heterogeneous group of practitioners. Understanding the issues and challenges that have influenced the development of ethical standards for administrators can contribute to advancing our understanding of ethics and improve the prospects for effectively implementing a code of ethics that applies broadly to public service positions.

After calls for establishing a code for the profession of public administration starting in the late 1930s, ASPA—the association created in 1939 with the intention of organizing the field—did not act and was often criticized for its failure to approve a code of ethics until its forty-fifth year. The ICMA code of ethics was offered as an example of what might be created for public administration generally (Mosher 1938), but for decades, scholars and practitioners in public administration generally viewed codes negatively and gave little attention to the study or promotion of ethics (Cooper 1994). ASPA did not take formal actions to advance ethical codes within the field until the 1970s. The questions of whether to have a code of ethics and what it should contain have been central to the debate about whether public administration is a profession as opposed to a collection of professions with vague, shared values (Mosher 1968; Pugh 1988).

The first code of ethics adopted by ASPA in 1984 was an important step that established fundamental standards shared by public administrators. It was revised in 1994 with reorganization and clarification of the sources of ethical standards. A new version was approved in 2013 that broadened the scope of values and standards for administrators who serve the public across fields and levels of government and other sectors.

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The debate over the appropriateness, content, and implementation of a code of ethics for public administration is examined in this article. There were shared values in the public administration community

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historically and early proposals for a code of ethics in 1938 and 1949. Developing a code was delayed by negative views of codes within public administration, but the ASPA code, with revisions over time, has articulated standards for all people in public service. In the conclusion, future steps to implement a code and promote awareness of ethics across public administration are considered.

The Purpose of Codes of Ethics

Codes of ethics provoke opposing views in public administration. They have often been criticized for being too abstract or too specific to be meaningful (Ink 1979, ii). Ladd (1980) even questioned whether a code of ethics is necessary. In his view, ethics cannot be set by fiat; having a code contradicts the notion of ethics itself. On the other hand, codes of ethics can specify acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in a profession. If accompanied by effective implementation that regularly identifies ethical issues confronted by practitioners, codes can ground ethics in the challenges of practicing a profession (Gilman 2005). Bowman (1990) suggested that codes may be designed to be regulatory, educational, or inspirational. The goals expressed in the inspirational tenets in codes are akin to the "internal goods" that associations (or "practices") are supposed to advance (Cooper 1987). Beyond identifying aspects of unacceptable behavior, codes can express the expectations of positive ethical behavior by people at all levels of administration (Svara 2007, 76). Finally, codes inform people outside the profession what they can and should expect. For example, one of the explicit purposes of the National Association of Social Workers code is to provide "ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable" (NASW 2008, "Purpose").

The creation of codes occurred along with the development of professional associations in the twentieth century. In contrast to the ICMA's early action, the NASW adopted its first code of ethics in 1960, five years after the association was formed (Reamer 2009). The American Society of Planning Officials created its first code in 1962, and the affiliated American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) established its code in 1971 (Silva 2005, 312). Before 1984, the vast majority of public administrators might have been guided by the codes of these associations if they were aware of them, but these codes were not written for them and did not necessarily match their responsibilities. Thus, most public administrators were left to decide as individuals what standards to adhere to and whether and how to observe them.

The question of what approach should be taken regarding the development of a code of ethics is related to the perennial question of whether ASPA is intended to advance the professional qualities of individuals in public administration by promoting research, education, and networking or lead a profession of public administrators with clear standards of ethical behavior. Instead of viewing itself as a profession of public administration, ASPA "opted for the pursuit of professionalism among its members—a subtle but significant distinction" (Pugh 1988, 3; Pugh 1989). After a code was finally adopted in ASPA, the professionalism-versus-profession question became whether individuals should use the code on their own as a guide to their behavior or whether the association should also establish a process for enforcing the code (commentary by Mylon Winn, in Menzel 2010, 123). This question has persisted: can public administration be a profession without an enforceable code of ethics?

The long absence of a code in ASPA and complaints about taking too narrow an approach to developing a code (Chandler 1982, 1983) have led some to conclude that adopting broad ethical standards was a difficult departure from earlier thinking in the field that stressed a narrow "technical-rational" approach to administrative practice (Adams and Balfour 1998; Pugh 1991). The traditional approaches to the theory and practice of public administration, however, were rooted in a broad range of public-serving values.[1] As Lewis and Gilman put it, "ethics is more accurately seen as a renewal rather than a radical departure from traditional practice" (2012, 11).

Ethical Values and Standards in Public Administration

The moral dimension of public administration has deep historical roots. Duty was stressed by Plato (French 1983), virtue by Aristotle (Cooper 1987; Hart 1984), and honesty and respect for cultural values by Confucius (Gladden 1972, 149–50). Many of the values that were promoted in modern American public administration were intrinsic to the field from the eighteenth century onward as developed in Europe (Lynn 2006; Rutgers 1997)—values that reflect standards for internal administrative performance as well as larger ethical and social values. The founders of the federal government expected administrators to be "public spirited" (Bowman and West 2011, 33), and these same values were explicitly advanced by the reformers of the late nineteenth century (Richardson and Nigro 1987, 368). It is noteworthy that the Congress in 1884, after passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883, adopted the oath to be taken by executive branch employees that is still used today *(5 U.S.C. § 3331) (OPM n.d.)*. Administrators in the federal government are not simply expected to passively or obediently discharge the duties of their office; they pledge to uphold the U.S. Constitution and advance its purposes (Rohr 1989, 69–70).

Values in "Traditional" Public Administration

The field of public administration in the first half of the twentieth century developed more fully the expectation that administrators would demonstrate values that support their shared mission to serve the public and elevate the performance of government. It is common, however, to portray these early administrators as technocrats (Adams and Balfour 1998) who were "value-free" (Henry 1975, 379–80), with an overwhelming commitment to promoting efficiency (Waldo 1948, 200) and no interest in promoting democracy (Waldo 1948, 73–74; Waldo 1952, 85). In Pugh's view, "the cast of mind that dominated this field was essentially bureaucratic" (1989, 2). It is important to recognize that even traditional administrative values such as efficiency, expertise, and accountability serve a larger social purpose. They take on a "moral character" by promoting "fairness, justice, avoidance of favoritism, and the consideration of all relevant interests," as well as "a commitment to stewardship of the public's resources through expert management to assure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness" (Denhardt 1989, 188).

In addition, there was also attention among early scholars to a broad range of values that affect how administrators should be involved in the interpretation and formation of policy, in the relationship of administrators to citizens and groups, and in the political process in general. The public administration literature before 1940 examines both the internal and external responsibilities of administrators and how they relate to each other. "The 'old' public administration provides prescriptions that are remarkably relevant to current concerns"

(Svara 1999, 691), including a broad commitment to democracy. In Newland's view, the ideal of public administration was promotion of the general welfare, supporting democracy, and "giving? meaning to civic duty" (1984, 18).

Many of these values were contested and subject to differing interpretations in the first 50 years of the field of public administration in the United States, and they could easily be overshadowed by the strong emphasis on administration as a science in the 1930s (Martin 1952). Still, the theory and practice of administration did not warrant the conclusion that administration was a "self-contained world of its own" (Sayre 1958, 102). Scholars who adopted this view that the field was "self-contained" concluded that administrators did not recognize the need to be concerned with value questions because they were resolved by elected officials. Reexamination of the early literature challenges the idea that the founders of the field constructed a politics–administration dichotomy and ignored ethical issues (Svara 1999). Furthermore, the "classical" model of public administration in the 1930s includes a "recognition of the policy-making role of civil servants, the inevitability of administrative discretion, … the concomitant requirement for responsible conduct by managers and civil servants, and the necessity for ensuring that citizens can somehow participate actively in matters affecting their well-being based on adequate information" (Lynn 2001, 151).

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The ICMA Code of Ethics, initially adopted in 1924, reflected these responsibilities. Most city managers before the 1950s were trained as engineers, and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) was a path setter in adopting a code for its members in 1914. Whereas the ASCE code stressed the responsibilities of engineers to their employers and to each other, the ICMA code articulated the association's social purpose, respect for the democratic process, and the broad responsibilities of city managers to advise the council, inform the public, and exercise their own executive judgment in accomplishing policies set by the council. There were many boundary issues that managers had to confront in the early decades, but they clearly manifested through their association a commitment to a broad set of ethical standards (Arnold and Plant 1994, 39).

The administration community that organized as an association in 1939 had a strong value base and extensive informal professionalism on which to build. The question was how the values would be articulated and whether they would be codified and enforced.

Early Calls for a Code of Ethics for the Field

William Mosher (1938, 333), who would become the first president of ASPA in 1939, included ethics among the three key factors that would provide the foundation for a "profession of public service" (336). In his view, ethics is both an individual and shared responsibility: "Although each member of the profession is the keeper of the code, its long-run maintenance occasionally calls for disciplinary measures which should be judicially applied by a properly constituted body acting under prescribed procedures against those who violate it" (338).

The code should be based on four major themes that, in Mosher's view, are well established and widely accepted: the public interest, relationships with other officials and "official-public relationships," "personal integrity," and a commitment to serving "the *whole* public, performing their tasks impartially and without fear or favor" (Mosher 1938, 339). While acknowledging the ICMA code and one for teachers, Mosher argued that developing a code would "go far toward stimulating a professional *esprit de corps*" among all administrators who are "engaged in serving the public" (336).

The second call for a broad code of ethics in the field of public administration came from Fritz Morstein Marx. To promote ethics in administration, he saw the need for the "growth and acknowledgment of an administrative morality always ready to raise its voice in support of the needs of democratic society" (1949, 1144). Like Mosher, Marx stressed the linkage between public service and "popular government" (1127) and "a long-range concept of the general interest" (1132). Administrators are not "inanimate cogs or mindless robots," but they do not exercise "absolute discretion" to determine the ends they pursue (1127–28). Administrators have the opportunity or formal responsibility "to render advice" on pending measures (1137). Marx, like Mosher, asserted that "recognition of the importance of common standards of ethics is one of the hallmarks of a profession" (1144). A similar approach was taken by Monypenny, who called for administrators to develop and adopt a "systematic statement of the highest standards of perception and devotion" (1953, 187) that apply to their work. Later scholars would reinforce the importance of enforcement for the standards to be meaningful (e.g., Bowman and Williams 1997; Chandler 1983; Pugh 1989).

Despite these statements that expressed the rationale for having a code and outlined the areas that could be covered, there was little attention given to ethics in the public administration literature before the 1970s. The limited articles on the topic of codes conveyed differing views about the nature of ethical standards and expressed reservations about using a code to promote ethics. Nigro and Richardson (1990) observed that the attempt to integrate external and internalized controls suggested by Monypenny was not examined further in subsequent editions of *Public Administration Review* through the 1980s.[2]

Criticizing and Ignoring Codes of Ethics

A fundamental objection to internal standards within a professional field is based on the importance of external control. As reflected in the views of Finer (1941), some argue that administrators should be neutral and highly responsive to elected officials (Flemming 1953) and that restoration of bureaucratic controls of administrative behavior is needed to increase accountability (Gawthrop 1981, summarizing a presentation by Donald Devine). Wood focused on the need to prevent corruption and asserted that "public officials have the duty to make sure that their employees are honest" through expanded "administrative investigatory facilities" (1955, 3). Although Appleby observed a "special kind of integrity" (1952,

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55) among public administrators based in part on "self-selection" of people searching for an opportunity to serve,[3] he stressed the importance of political control and viewed hierarchical structure a protector of morality because it ensured that decisions would move up levels in the organization to officials with broader perspectives, more experience, and greater political awareness. Frederick Mosher (1968, 215) was concerned that codes reinforced professional autonomy.

There were several objections to a code for public administration from those who supported ethics but offered practical or conceptual objections to having a code. Merriam posted an immediate response to Mosher's article with reservations about developing a code of ethics that would apply "to our public services as a whole" because it is too diverse (1938, 723; see also Arnold and Plant 1993). A related argument was that ASPA was not a professional association that had a stake in securing recognition for its members as a qualification for employment and ensuring that its members meet the association's standards (Plant 2013).

A common argument was that codes were too narrow and negative in their focus (Leys 1943, 12). The Code of Ethics for Government Service approved by the U.S. House of Representatives in 1958 with concurrence of the Senate reflected this shortcoming with its focus on specific requirements and prohibitions. Commentary by Geoffrey Cornog summed up what appeared to be the prevailing view about how to promote ethics: "We can choose the way of the codes, the administrative regulation, and the statute, or we can follow Moses (Robert, that is) when he says firmly: ' … what we need is better men, not more laws to guarantee their competence and honesty'" (1962, 103). Similarly, Rohr (1978) criticized the low-road approach to ethics based on narrow rules of conduct.

Alternative approaches to promote responsible behavior by administrators were emphasized by leading scholars. Bailey (1964) stressed individual moral qualities and individual responsibility. Bailey argued that the "hard questions of public ethics are not answered by the semantic concoctions, pious platitudes, and appalling lack of subtlety that often characterize the codes enunciated to guide political and administrative behavior" (1964, 234). Instead, he stressed individual virtues. The "essential moral qualities of the ethical public servant are: (1) optimism; (2) courage; and (3) fairness tempered by charity" (235–36). Like Appleby (1952, 145), Mosher feared the consequences of growing "professional enclaves" with "professional (as against civil service) control of personnel" (1968, 212–13). Responsible public administrators need to develop the values and moral standards stressed by Bailey. They should also acquire the "ability to weigh the relevant premises judiciously" in handling problems (Mosher 1968, 218) through continuing education courses in higher education: "The universities offer the best hope of making the professions safe for democracy" (219). Leys (1943) as well advocated the study of philosophical approaches to ethics, and Rohr (1978) promoted the study of regime values.

There were few visible activities within ASPA to promote ethics into the early 1970s. Spurred by the Watergate scandal and the attention to social equity raised by the New Public Administration (Marini 1971), ASPA formed the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee (PSEC) in 1974. The PSEC focused initially on helping administrators reflect on their ethical values and responsibilities

(Cooper 1998, 160). Herman Mertins, the editor of the workbook *Professional Standards and Ethics,* stated in the introduction that "although it is possible to develop a long list of 'thou shalts' and 'thou shalt nots,' as many professions have done, ultimate responsibility for applying standards and ethics still falls on the individual" (1979, 1). Thus, the workbook provided a diagnostic rather than a prescriptive approach to help individuals assess their responsibilities and decide on an appropriate response to the challenges they faced.

Despite reservations about codes of ethics, the PSEC began working on developing a code. An initial subcommittee draft was proposed in 1981, but it was not acceptable to the full committee despite a spirited defense by the subcommittee chairperson, Ralph Clark Chandler (1982, 1983). In an alternative approach, a Statement of Principles had been developed and was approved by the National Council in 1981. Finding the right content, tone, and rationale for a code that would address the standards of public service professionals and secure support from the diverse practitioner and academic membership of ASPA was a challenge. Still, no other existing professional code matched the conditions of the broad field of public administration, and work continued on drafting a code.

Codes of Ethics in ASPA

From 1984 through 2013, ASPA adopted a code of ethics and approved two revisions. After the features of each code are briefly reviewed, the development of the content of the code over time will be considered.

Based primarily on the 1981 Statement of Principles (Plant 2013), a code was developed by the committee that secured National Council approval in 1984, and in the next year, a set of implementation guidelines was adopted.[4] The response to the initial code was muted and often critical. Some academic scholars in ethics would have preferred a more active and far-reaching code (Chandler 1982; Cooper 1987; Denhardt 1989; Pugh 1991), but it was a significant step forward to establish a code that was relevant to all public administrators.

The 1994 code was a major reorientation of the code that clearly set forth the major principles for organizing ethics for the field while incorporating most of the 1985 version.[5] The five principles stressed the responsibility of administrators to take actions that are consistent with and advance the law, public interest, integrity, organizational ethics, and developing excellence in oneself and others (Van Wart 1996). The new code was well received and widely respected by members of ASPA (Bowman and Williams 1997, 521), although it was later criticized for shortcomings in addressing social responsibilities (Svara 2007, 78). A review of the ASPA Code of Ethics was undertaken from 2001 to 2003, but no changes resulted from this review (Van Wart 2003).

A new code was approved in 2013.[6] The new code expanded the scope of the values and standards and focuses on eight principles based on formal roles, key relationships, and responsibilities to society. It returned to the approach taken in 1984 (and suggested in 2003) by making the eight principles the code and providing a separate statement of practices to guide the use of the code.[7] As in earlier versions, the code reached beyond ASPA members in seeking "to increase awareness and commitment to ethical principles and standards among all those who work in public service in all sectors."

Table 1 Changes in Ethical Standards in ASPA Codes of Ethics

	1984	1994	2013
Public service and public interest	2.* Serve the public with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the public is beyond service to oneself. 8. Exercise whatever discretionary authority we have…to promote the public interest.	I. Serve the Public Interest. Serve the public, beyond serving oneself. *IV-2. Subordinate personal interests and institutional loyalties to the public good.*	1. Advance the Public Interest. Promote the interests of the public and put service to the public above service to oneself. *1-e. [Serve] with dedication to high standards.* *1-a. Seek to advance the good of the public as a whole, taking into account current and long-term interests of the society.*
Respect the Constitution and the law	12. Respect, support, study, and when necessary, work to improve federal and state constitutions and other laws.	II. Respect the Constitution and the Law. Respect, support, and study government constitutions and laws that define responsibilities of public agencies, employees, and all citizens. *II-1. [Apply] legislation and regulations relevant to their… role.* *II-2. Improve and change laws and policies that are counterproductive or obsolete.* *II-7. Promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process.*	2. Uphold the Constitution and the Law. Respect and support government constitutions and laws, while seeking to improve laws and policies to promote the public good. *2-a. Recognize and understand the constitutional, legislative and regulatory framework in which you work and fully discharge your professional roles and responsibilities.* *2-c. [Develop] proposals for sound laws and policies and for improving or eliminating laws and policies that are… unethical.*
Democratic process	*Guideline. Encourage citizen cooperation and to involve civic groups, to bring citizens into work with the government as far as practical, and to respect the right of the public (through the media) to know what is going on in your agency.*	*I-3. Recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.* *I-4. Involve citizens in policy decision-making.* *I-6. Respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand.* *I-7. Assist citizens in their dealings with government.*	3. Promote democratic participation. Inform the public and encourage active engagement in governance. Be open, transparent and responsive. *3-c. Involve the community in the development, implementation, and assessment of policies and public programs, and seek to empower citizens in the democratic process."*
Social equity	10. Support, implement, and promote… programs of affirmative action to assure equal employment opportunity… from all elements of society. 11. Eliminate all forms of illegal discrimination….	*I-2. Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment, and promote affirmative action.* *II-3. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.*	4. Strengthen social equity. Treat all persons with fairness, justice, and equality and respect individual differences, rights, and freedoms. Promote affirmative action and other initiatives to reduce unfairness, injustice, and inequality in society. *4-c. "Reduce disparities in outcomes and increase the inclusion of underrepresented groups."*
Advising superiors and peers			5. Fully Inform and Advise. Provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice to elected and appointed officials and governing board members, and to staff members in your organization.
Personal integrity	1. Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fortitude in all our public activities. 5. Serve in such a way that we do not realize undue personal gain. 6. Avoid any interest or activity which is in conflict with…our official duties. 7. Protect the privileged information.	III. Demonstrate Personal Integrity. Demonstrate the highest standards in all activities to inspire public confidence and trust in public service. *I-5. Exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism.* *III-1. [Do not compromise integrity] for advancement, honor, or personal gain.* *III-5. Take responsibility for their own errors.* *III-6. Conduct official acts without partisanship.*	6. Demonstrate personal integrity. Adhere to the highest standards of conduct. *6-c. Resist pressures to compromise ethical integrity and support others who are subject to these pressures.* *6-d. Accept…responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.* *6-f. Disclose any interests that may affect objectivity in making decisions and recuse oneself from participation in those decisions.* *6-g. Conduct official acts without…favoritism.*
Organizational ethics	4. Approach our organization…with a positive attitude and…support open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion. 10. Support, implement, and promote merit employment…. 11. Eliminate all forms of … fraud, and mismanagement of public funds, and support colleagues if they are in difficulty because of responsible efforts to correct such discrimination, fraud, mismanagement or abuse.	IV. Promote Ethical Organizations. Strengthen organizational capabilities to apply ethics, efficiency and effectiveness in serving the public. *II-4. [Establish] strong fiscal and management controls [and support] audits and investigative activities.* *II-6. [Support] legitimate dissent activities in government and protect the whistleblowing rights of public employees.* *IV-3. [Support] procedures that promote ethical behavior and hold individuals and organizations accountable for their conduct.* *IV-4. [Provide] administrative means for dissent, assurance of due process and safeguards against reprisal.* *IV-7. Support an organizational code of ethics.*	7. Promote Ethical Organizations: Strive to attain the highest standards of ethics, stewardship, and public service in organizations that serve the public. *7-b. Promote stewardship.* *7-d. Correct instances of wrongdoing or report them to superiors [or to persons outside the organization].* *7-f. Increase the representativeness of the public workforce and the full inclusion of persons with diverse characteristics.*
Professional development	3. Strive for personal professional excellence and encourage the professional development of our associates and those seeking to enter the field of public administration. 9. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues.	V. Strive for Professional Excellence. Strengthen individual capabilities and encourage the professional development of others. *V-4. Advance the development of students.*	8. Advance Professional Excellence: Strengthen personal capabilities to act competently and ethically. *8-c. [Advance the development] of interns,…, and beginning professionals.*

* The number of the principle or tenet in the original code. Guidelines for implementation (in the 1984 and 2013 codes) and specific tenets (1994 code) are printed in italics with the principle and guideline number. Entries are limited to additions to the standards contained in previous versions.

Evolving Content of the Codes

The eight principles in the current ASPA code build on and expand the previous versions. In the following sections, the development of each principle is elaborated, stressing points added in each version. No important standards were rejected in the progression. A complete summary of the evolving content is found in table 1.

Public service and public interest. These two values have been intertwined from the beginning. Public administrators should "serve the public with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the public is beyond service to oneself" (1984) and "with dedication to high standards" (2013). Administrators should subordinate "personal interests and institutional loyalties to the public good" (1994). They should use their discretion to promote the public interest (1984). More broadly, all actions should advance the public interest, which is defined as "the good of the public as a whole, taking into account current and long-term interests of the society" (2013).

Uphold the Constitution and the law. Administrators should uphold the law by demonstrating that they "respect, support, study, and when necessary, work to improve federal and state constitutions and other laws" (1984) and understand and apply "legislation and regulations relevant to their professional role" (1994). They should work "to improve and change laws and policies that are counterproductive or obsolete" (1994) or "unethical" (2013) and, in general, seek "to improve laws and policies" (2013). Administrators should "promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process in protecting citizens' rights" (1994).

Democratic process. Administrators have the responsibility to "encourage citizen cooperation and to involve civic groups" and "to bring citizens into work with the government as far as practical" (1984). They should "recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business," "involve citizens in policy decision-making," "respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand," and "assist citizens in their dealings with government" (1994). More broadly, administrators should "promote democratic participation" and encourage "active engagement in governance" (2013).

Social equity. Administrators have the responsibility to oppose discrimination and harassment and promote affirmative action and seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination (1984 and 1994). They should work to "strengthen social equity" and to "promote affirmative action and other initiatives" to "reduce disparities in outcomes and increase the inclusion of underrepresented groups" (2013).

Advising superiors and peers. The 2013 code is the first to explicitly assert the principle that administrators should "fully inform and advise" elected officials and their superiors and peers within the organization. They are expected to "provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice" that is "based on a complete and impartial review of circumstances and needs of the public and the goals and objectives of the organization."

Virtue. The three codes offer ever-expanding statements of what is expected of virtuous public administrators. Administrators should

"demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fortitude in all our public activities," avoid personal gain, and avoid conflict of interest (1984). In addition, administrators should "exercise compassion, benevolence, fairness and optimism," "demonstrate personal integrity," and not compromise integrity "for advancement, honor, or personal gain" (1994). Taking responsibility for "errors" and avoiding partisanship (1994) was broadened to accepting individual responsibility for the consequences of one's actions and not showing "favoritism" (2013). Administrators support others who are subject to pressures to compromise ethical integrity (2013). They should "disclose any interests that may affect objectivity in making decisions and recuse oneself from participation in those decisions" (2013).

Ethical organizations. Administrators should approach their "organization and operational duties with a positive attitude and constructively support open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion." They should support the merit system, eliminate all forms of "fraud and mismanagement of public funds," and "support colleagues if they are in difficulty" for attempting to correct organizational failings (1984). It is their responsibility to establish "strong fiscal and management controls" and support "audits and investigative activities," provide "administrative means for dissent" and "safeguards against reprisal," and protect the "whistleblowing rights of public employees" (1994). Administrators should promote procedures that promote accountability, an organizational code of ethics (1994), and stewardship (2013). It is the responsibility of administrators to "correct instances of wrongdoing or report them to superiors" or to people outside the organization (2013). They should promote inclusion and diversity in their organizations (2013).

Professional excellence. The 1984 code called for administrators to "strive for personal professional excellence as well as supporting the professional development of associates and persons entering the field of public administration" and to "keep up to date on emerging issues" (1984). They should advance the development of students (1994), interns, and beginning professionals (2013).

New Implementation, Research, and Linkages

Entering 2014, the status of public service codes of ethics approximated the conditions that had existed since 1984. A number of specialized professional associations had codes focusing on their area of emphasis, and ASPA had a code offering standards for handling the ethical challenges that all administrators face. Its code, however, was presumably little known beyond its own members and simply advisory to them. To be effective, codes require an implementation process that involves interpreting the code and providing education and training, as well as a process for enforcing the code (Gilman 2005). ASPA should provide expanded educational activities and training materials, monitor challenges to ethical behavior in public service, and highlight important issues at annual and regional conferences. It should provide advice and assistance to members in handling ethical problems and highlight instances of exemplary ethical behavior. Finally, it should review and seek to resolve ethics complaints and take action that could include expulsion when an ASPA member is found to have violated the code.[8] These changes will provide the foundation for ASPA to reach out to other associations to expand the ethical perspectives of all public servants.

Not surprisingly, the standards of specialized groups of professionals are focused on the issues of each profession. These codes do not address some of the themes that pertain to the field as a whole. For example, the ICMA code does not refer to promoting social equity or encouraging citizen participation (Svara 2007, 77). The AICP and NASW codes have expansive statements of social responsibility and citizen participation, but neither explicitly addresses respecting constitutional freedoms and rights or following the spirit and letter of the law. They focus on the needs of the people they serve but give little attention to the broader public interest. The ICMA, AICP, and the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) code do not refer to promoting ethical practices and standards within their organizations. The International Public Management Association for Human Resources and the IACP codes do not address the public interest, improving law and policy, involving the public, whistle-blowing, or supporting dissent (Svara 2012).

The long-stated concern that ASPA membership is too diverse to have an effective code of ethics can be seen as an advantage that gives it a broad perspective. ASPA is a uniquely "pan-generalist" organization that spans specializations, levels of government, and sectors (Svara and Terry 2009). All public administrators have shared responsibilities and encounter common challenges in the areas covered by the ASPA code that may be outside their specialized area of expertise. ASPA members have worked to develop standards and values to guide how to interact with citizens, political superiors, and the law. They share with other professionals a commitment to integrity and professional development, but they address the public interest, social equity, and organizational integrity from a broader perspective. The ASPA code can complement focused codes of ethics and help administrators understand the full scope of responsibilities they have as public servants as well as their specific responsibilities (Svara 2012). It can guide its own members and serve as a bridge to the "professional enclaves" Mosher identified (1968, 212–13).

Expanded research is needed to better understand codes and the ethical behavior they are intended to promote. Topics include analysis of the content of codes, comparison of review processes and their results across associations (for example, the study of ICMA by Benavides, Dicke, and Maleckaite 2012), and examination of association members' familiarity with their code and how they use it (updating Bowman and Williams 1997). Little is known about the extent of association membership among administrators and the impact of memberships on attitudes and behavior. Surveys of public administrators rarely ask whether they have behaved ethically, with the exception of reporting wrongdoing that is included in surveys by the Merit Systems Protection Board (2011) and the Ethics Resource Center (2008). Questions about providing complete information to superiors and colleagues, making efforts to improve programs or policies, promoting transparency and outreach to the public, supporting colleagues, advancing equity, developing individual competency, and strengthening the ethical climate of the organization would expand knowledge of positive ethical behavior by administrators and the factors related to it.

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More research is needed on the ways that professional codes of ethics relate to organizational codes and training programs and to the proliferating ethics laws in state (NCSL 2013) and local governments (ICMA 2012, 2). The impact of differing combinations of law-based and professional code-based content in training can be examined.

Public administration has come a long way since 1939, when only city managers and school teachers had codes of ethics. Many professional associations have now developed a code of ethics supported by a review process. Following their example, ASPA in its seventy-fifth anniversary year has moved beyond enunciating standards that members can choose to observe to taking more active measures to uphold and advance ethical standards in the public service. It is becoming an organizational keeper of the code that offers guidance to members, highlights their ethical achievements, and reviews ethical lapses. With these initiatives, ASPA can make contributions that extend beyond its members. In partnership with other associations, ASPA can expand the awareness of overarching ethical standards to meet the shared challenges of all people in public service.

Notes

1. For reviews of the emergence of ethics research in public administration generally, see Nigro and Richardson (1990) and Cooper (2001).

2. As editor of *Public Administration Review,* Dwight Waldo (1967) reprinted a proposal for a code of ethics for political scientists, but there was no reference either to its relevance to public administration scholars or to the question of whether public administration should have a code.

3. Research on the public service motivation of those in public service would substantiate this tendency (Perry 1997; Perry and Wise 1990).

4. For the code of ethics, see Pugh (1991, 20). The implementation guidelines are available at http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/3335 (accessed June 26, 2014).

5. The complete code is available at http://www.aspanet.org/public/ASPA/Resources/Code_of_Ethics/ASPA/Resources/Code%200f%20Ethics1.aspx (accessed June 26, 2014).

6. The code and the Statement of Practices are available at www.aspanet.org/CodeofEthics [accessed July 8, 2014].

7. This approach is used by the International City/County Management Association, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and the American Psychological Association.

8. These are recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Implementation of the ASPA Code of Ethics, January 22, 2014. They were approved by the ASPA National Council on March 15, 2014, as part of a proposal to establish a new standing Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee. Final approval is subject to a vote by ASPA members to revise the bylaws in November 2014.

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