

Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs

by Richard N. de los Reyes

THE WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND International Affairs is designed to enhance policy-making skills for those who are dedicated to public service. The past year has proven the Woodrow Wilson School's dedication to public service as over a dozen men and women associated with the School were chosen to serve in President Clinton's administration. These individuals include the National Security Adviser, the Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Director of the National Economic Council, and the Assistant Secretary for Defense. In addition, four graduates, two former Mid-Career Fellows, and two faculty members are serving on the Health Care Task Force headed by Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The Woodrow Wilson School shows its devotion to developing analytical skills for policy making through its two year program for the degree of Master in Public Affairs (M.P.A.). The curriculum contains four types of courses: those devoted to analytical skills, those in the four fields of specialization, policy workshops, and electives. The development of analytical skills is achieved through four courses taken in the first year: Public Management- Political and Organizational Analysis, Quantitative Analysis, Microeconomic Analysis, and Macroeconomic Analysis. These four courses comprise the core curriculum. At the same time, students take courses from their chosen field of specialization. The four fields are International Relations, Development Studies, Domestic Policy, and Economics and Public Policy. Each of these fields has a list of its own required courses. In addition, all students participate in policy workshops. According to the School's bulletin, these workshops "provide a structure in which students, under faculty leadership, work as a group to solve a concrete policy problem or institutional dilemma." This gives students the opportunity to learn the art of policy-making while working with other students.

Students may also opt for a joint degree program, combining the study of public policy with another field. Within the School, the Masters in Public Affairs can be combined with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning, Population, or Science and Technology. In addition, the School offers a joint degree program of law and public policy with the law schools of Columbia University and New York University. In this program, students spend five semesters studying at their chosen law school and three semesters at the Woodrow Wilson School, thereby reducing by two semesters the amount of time normally needed to earn the two degrees. Students must apply separately to both schools and be admitted to both. In addition, the Woodrow Wilson School requires joint degree program applicants to submit an additional essay explaining their reasons for pursuing both degrees.

The Woodrow Wilson School has many resources

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available to aid students in their research. The Woodrow Wilson School Library houses a collection of texts that support the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. The Library also contains up-to-date periodicals from the social sciences. Other libraries throughout the university, such as the Urban and Environmental Studies Library and the Library of Economics and Finance, are available for use to all students. Computer facilities are located on the lower level of the School, and the School even offers small group instruction in order to help students gain computer literacy.

Admission to the Woodrow Wilson School is highly competitive. Applicants must submit a transcript of all grades received from each college and graduate school attended and scores from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The average grade point average of the most recently admitted class was 3.5, and the average scores on the GRE were 670 on the verbal section, 695 on the quantitative section, and 700 on the

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analytical section. In addition, applicants must submit a policy memorandum concerning some problem that relates to the applicant's area of interest. According to the School bulletin, this is "an exercise in analysis and writing, and is considered carefully by the Admissions Committee." Applicants are also required to submit three letters of reference, and a resume. Students planning to study international subjects are expected to demonstrate an ability in foreign languages.

As a result of these strict admissions procedures, the students at the Woodrow Wilson School are nearly all very competent. "There's a lot of helpful and constructive interaction," said second-year student Lisa McNeilly, "It's not cut throat at all." Overall, students report a great deal of cooperation among the students and less of a feeling of competition. Because the school has group activities, such as policy conferences, students are accustomed to cooperating with each other if they hope to accomplish anything.

The emphasis on policy making is what has drawn many students to the school. According to second-year student Alex Cohen, "This is a school for policy-makers, not politicians. That's a definite contrast to the Kennedy School." Students view the School as a place to learn the tools of policy making in order to take roles in public policy.

In addition to taking classes, students of the Woodrow Wilson School gain practical experience in a professional work-

ing environment. Students can opt to participate in a work-study program during the academic year in place of one course. In the past, work-study jobs have ranged from working for a community development organization in Trenton to an internship with the United Nations. Students take these jobs very seriously, and in many cases they are able to turn their work-study jobs into full time careers after graduating. In addition, the School requires that all students gain experience through an internship with a public agency during the summer between their first and second years in the program. Many students use this time as an opportunity to work for an agency in another part of the country or overseas.

Studying at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs is very rewarding, but its reward has a price. The 1993-1994 Graduate School tuition is \$19,040. However, the school has a need-blind admissions policy and is very generous with financial aid. According to the bulletin, the school prefers grants to loans, ensuring that graduates take the jobs they want to take, not the ones that they have to take to pay back their loans. Over 75 percent of students receive financial aid and a relatively large percentage of students have their full tuition paid for them.

Most graduates of the Woodrow Wilson School pursue careers in the government. According to the bulletin, they "work in public agencies of all levels—international, national, state, and local—in the United States and abroad." Although the job market has been very tight due to the recent recession, the

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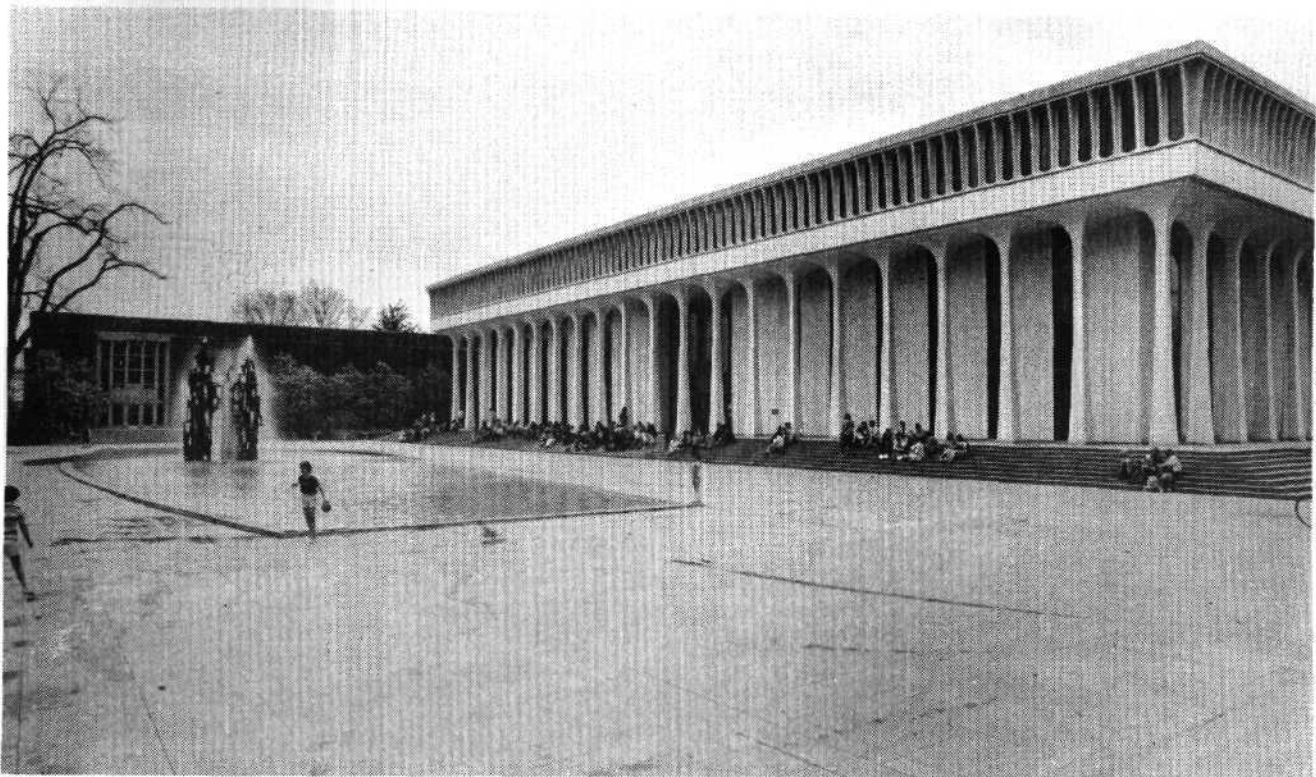
Office of Career Services works diligently to ensure that graduates are able to secure employment. Career Services maintains close ties with contacts in numerous public agencies and with many of its alumni. Career Services also provides career counseling and information sessions to make students more marketable. Typical first jobs of Woodrow Wilson School graduates range from a Foreign Service Officer for the State Department to a Legislative Assistant for a Senator to a Business Writer for The New York Times.

All students of the Woodrow

Wilson School are guaranteed housing by the University. Students have many housing options. Because the School is so small (only about 160 students) most can live in the Graduate College, but some students live in annexes or other University-owned housing.

The smallness of the School can actually be one of its drawbacks. Some students feel that the smallness of the School limits the number of classes which can be offered. In addition, the School's size limits the amount of social activity for graduate students. "There's not a very good social scene," says Alex Cohen, "If you restrict your social scene just to the program it's going to be pretty limited." The town of Princeton offers very little to students socially, and most of the social activities on campus are directed toward the much larger undergraduate community. As a result, graduate life can seem very stifling and claustrophobic.

At the same time, the smallness of the School is what makes its program so strong. It allows for small classes and policy conferences led by some of the most esteemed professors in the world. In addition, it allows for a great deal of informal interaction between the students and the faculty. The combination of these factors makes a Woodrow Wilson School education beneficial and worthwhile for all of its students. •



Robertson Hall. Courtesy of Princeton University