2005-2006 :: M.P.A. in Public Affairs

1. Mission Statement: The mission of the Master of Public Affairs is to educate professionals in public and non-profit management, policy analysis, and applied technology for effective careers in public policy and public management organizational environments. The program serves local, regional, and national communities through professional development programs, public policy, and management analyses, program and policy design, and as a forum for new ideas and approaches to policy and management problems. The curriculum is intended to train students who ultimately assume senior staff, managerial and leadership roles in public agencies and other organizations

2. Objectives:

2.1 Demonstrate knowledge: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the theoretical foundations of public management and leadership, non-profit management and leadership, policy analysis, and civic engagement in governance.

2.1.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 8. US and Texas Government & Politics; 9. Social & Behavioral Science; 10. Foundational Knowledge in Discipline(s)

2.1.2 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

2.2 Learn spesific skills and knowledge: Students will learn specific skills and knowledge that will prepare them for challenging positions of management responsibility and/or policy analysis in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

2.2.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 8. US and Texas Government & Politics; 9. Social & Behavioral Science; 10. Foundational Knowledge in Discipline(s); 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s)

2.3 Develop research and writing skills: Students will develop their research and writing skills so that they can effectively communicate their ideas based on study and research.

2.3.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 1. Communication

2.3.2 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

2.4 Present complex idea and research finding orally: Students will have the ability to present complex ideas and research findings orally.

2.4.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 1. Communication

2.4.2 Student Related Objective: Yes - This is a student related objective.

3. Measures & Findings:

3.1 Demonstrate knowledge of PA Theories: Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze and apply core areas of Public Affairs in PA 5303, PA 5307, PA 5308,,PA 5315, PA 5316, PA 5321, PA 5323, PA 5343, PA 6320, and PA 6342. 1.1.1 In PA 5305, students will write short papers demonstrating their ability to analyze issues of governance and public management. 1.1.2 In PA 5307, students will apply principles of economics to problems relevant to public management and policy analysis through a series of short problem sets. 1.1.3 In PA 5308, students will evaluate competing ethical theories while applying these theories to issues in public management, leadership, and governance through a series of short papers. 1.1.4 In PA 5315, students will create a term paper focusing on a prominent issue in public management. 1.1.5 In PA 5316, students will apply theories of leadership and management to a contemporary issue of public affairs through a term paper. 1.1.6 In PA 5321, students will apply principles of financial management to issues of public management through writing a term paper. 1.1.7 In PA 5323, students will apply tools of quality improvement in public agencies through a series of short writing assignments. 1.1.8 In PA 5343, students will analysis human resource procedures in public and non-profit management settings through a series of short writing assignments. 1.1.9 In PA 6320, students will evaluate competing theories of organizations to issues of public affairs through a series of short papers. 1.1.10 In PA 6342,

students will apply knowledge of local economic development practices through a series of short writing assignments. Data collected every semester at the conclusion of each course.

3.1.1 Success Criteria: 90% of students earn a "satisfactory" or better rating in assessments listed above.

3.1.2 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate knowledge

3.1.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All classes met the target except for:
PA 5305. Only 75% of students met the "satisfactory" standard.
PA 5321: Only 70% met the target.

3.1.4 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.1.5 Further Action: Yes

3.2 Course Evaluations: Students will complete course evaluations that determine whether they believe that they have achieved the learning objectives stated for each course. Data collected every semester.

3.2.1 Success Criteria: 80% of the students will grade the course at 3 or better on a scale of 1 to 5.

3.2.2 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate knowledge

3.2.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All classes met this standard with only one class having less than 90% attainment.

3.2.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.2.5 Further Action: No

3.3 Complete Internships or Workshops: Students who complete internships (PA 5V98) or workshops (PA 8V97), in which they apply skills developed in their degree program to a specific public affairs problem, will orally present the finding of their work. Data collected before completion of requirements for graduation.

3.3.1 Success Criteria: 90% of students will receive a "satisfactory" or better rating for the internships or workshops that they complete.

3.3.2 Related Objective(s): Learn spesific skills and knowledge

3.3.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All four students met the target.

3.3.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.3.5 Further Action: No

3.4 Course Evaluations: Students will complete course evaluations that determine whether they believe that they have achieved the learning objectives stated for each internship or workshop. Data collected every semester.

3.4.1 Success Criteria: 80% of the students will grade the course at 3 or better on a scale of 1 to 5.

3.4.2 Related Objective(s): Learn spesific skills and knowledge

3.4.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All students evaluations met this standard.

3.4.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.4.5 Further Action: No

3.5 Write Short Papers: Students will write papers based on the course subject material for PA 5305, PA 5308, PA 5323, PA 5343, PA 6320 and PA 6342.

3.5.1 Success Criteria: 80% of students will receive a "satisfactory" or better rating on the written assignments given to them in each assessment listed above.

3.5.2 Related Objective(s): Develop research and writing skills

3.5.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All classes met the standard except for 5305 where 75% of students met the standard.

3.5.4 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.5.5 Further Action: Yes

3.6 Term Paper: Student will create term papers based on individual research related to their course material in PA 5325, PA 5316, and PA 5321.

3.6.1 Success Criteria: 80% of students` work should be rated "satisfactory" or better on their term papers.

3.6.2 Related Objective(s): Develop research and writing skills

3.6.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All courses met this standard - with an average percentage of approximately 95%.

3.6.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.6.5 Further Action: No

3.7 Class Presentations: Students will develop and make oral presentations in PA 5303, PA 5308, PA 5315, PA 5316, and PA 5319.

3.7.1 Success Criteria: 80% of students will receive a rating of "satisfactory" or better on the oral assignments given to them in each course listed above.

3.7.2 Related Objective(s): Present complex idea and research finding orally

3.7.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All courses met this standard - with the exception of one assignment in 5303 (where only 70% of students met the standard).

3.7.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.7.5 Further Action: No

3.8 Interaction with Professionals in the Field: Students will have opportunities to interface with practitioners in the fields of finance, human resource management, public management, and other fields to gain understanding of the pressing issues that are facing the world of practice and practitioners will be asked to evaluate the students   interaction during internship or workshop experiences.

3.8.1 Success Criteria: 80% of the students will receive an evaluation of "satisfactory" or better from the practitioners evaluating them during their internships or workshops.

3.8.2 Related Objective(s): Present complex idea and research finding orally

3.8.3 Results Related To Success Criteria: All four students met the target.

3.8.4 Achievement Level: Met

3.8.5 Further Action: No

5. Closing the Loop:

5.1 Offer More Assistance Related to Writing Skills: Faculty reporting areas of non-attainment of the targets suggested that many of the problems stem from poor writing and composition skills. The program should offer more assistance in developing students writing skills.

5.1.1 Related Objective(s): Develop research and writing skills

5.1.2 Related Measure(s): Write Short Papers; Term Paper; Demonstrate knowledge of PA Theories

5.1.3 Responsible Person: Doug Watson

5.1.4 Target Date: Spring 2007

5.1.5 Priority: Low Priority

5.2 Continual Updating: Faculty reported that they needed to update cases used for examples - as well as articles discussed in class.

5.2.1 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate knowledge

5.2.2 Related Measure(s): Demonstrate knowledge of PA Theories

5.2.3 Responsible Person: Doug Watson

5.2.4 Target Date: Spring 2008

5.2.5 Priority: Low Priority

6. Analysis:

6.1 Program/Unit Strengths:

6.1.1 Objectives/Outcomes Exceeded or Met: The MPA program has many strengths. The faculty teaching in the program are diverse and meeting the needs of the students. The curriculum seems to be meeting the student s needs as evidenced from strong feedback on internships and students evaluations. The growth in the program has allowed us to diversify course offerings and bring in many instructors with practical experience.

6.2 Program / Unit Weakneses:

6.2.1 Objectives / Outcomes Partially or Not Met: The growth of the program that has allowed for the development of such strengths is also the source of some concerns. Continued growth will stretch the faculty thin requiring an excessive reliance on adjunct instructors or severe limitations on the availability of electives.

7. Report:

7.1 Executive Summary: Executive Summary for Public Affairs Programs

This has been a year of remarkable growth and development in the Public Affairs program. The assessments of the in-class activities of students, paired with information gathered through meetings with a student focus group and the advisory board reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the Public Affairs program.

The in-class assessments included in WEAVE suggest that at the graduate level we need to provide more resources to improve student writing skills. Areas where students failed to meet our targets were associated with written assignments in class. The faculty noted, almost unanimously, that there were many students that seemed unable to write at an appropriate level to meet the demands of the courses. These students were generally those who failed to meet the class standards.

To address these concerns, we have initiated two activities. First, the introductory courses for the PhD program (where the problem was seen to be most acute) are including a greater writing preparation component. More attention will be paid to writing as a means of identifying areas where students need to develop their writing skills. Second, in the Spring of 2007 several faculty members offered a Saturday morning writing workshop. The attendance at this workshop was superb (exceeding 60 students from across different programs) and the student s evaluations of the experience were overwhelmingly positive. More such workshops are planned for the future.

The comments of students and advisory committees for various programs revealed a key programmatic challenge. While added faculty in the Fall of 2006 to address what were seen as key areas of need (nonprofit administration, legal environment of bureaucracy, and administrative ethics), there is still far more demand for classes than faculty who can teach them. This problem manifests in several ways.

First, students are asking for more diverse course offerings (particularly in the area of nonprofit management) than we can offer. Second, the undergraduate program includes too few full-time faculty members because of competing commitments to develop the graduate programs. Third, class sizes in the PhD program are much larger than is generally expected for such classes (often filling the classrooms at or around 25 doctoral students per class   some faculty complain that this is about twice as large as the ideal maximum class size for doctoral seminars). Fourth, more adjunct instructors are asked to teach classes than had been anticipated. Fifth, doctoral students are beginning to worry that finding an advisor for a dissertation will be difficult with as many as four to five times as many students looking for advisors in the near future than there are core PA faculty.

This assessment process reveals that the strengths of the Public Affairs program are also its challenges for the future. There is incredible demand for the program (with enrollment in the MPA program increasing by approximately 30% in one year   while the PhD program doubled in size in the same period) that has led to considerable strain on teaching and advising resources. The availability of numerous experienced practitioners to teach as adjunct faculty has become a danger of allowing the core faculty to neglect such elements of the program as the BS degree program. The chief challenge for the program will be to manage growth so that educational quality does not suffer as the program continues to expand. This will likely require continued investments in faculty, particularly senior faculty to assist in the advising of dissertations.

7.2 Top 3 Program/Unit Accomplishments:

- The program added Alicia Shortgen to its faculty - bringing with her experience in nonprofit management and development.
- The program continued to grow reaching over 100 students at year   s end.
- Work began on recruiting additional in-service students with a cooperative program developing in consultation with local city governments.

7.3 Research Activities or Publications: Research and Scholarly Activity for Core PA Faculty in 2006

Articles and Book Chapters:

L. Douglas Kiel and Douglas J. Watson   Introduction: Special Issue on Natural Disasters and Public Works Management and Policy   *Public Works Management and Policy*.

Wendy L. Hassett and Donna M. Handley.   Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi   s Response. *Public Works Management & Policy*.

Wendy L. Hassett.   The Mayoral Leadership of Jan Miles Dempsey.   In *Mayors and Board Chairpersons: Reexamining the Contributions of Facilitative Leadership*, edited by James H. Svara. Jossey-Bass.

Wendy L. Hassett.   The   Shrinking   Strategy of Youngstown.   In *Building the Local Economy: Cases in Economic Development*, edited by Douglas J. Watson and John M. Morris. University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Scott E. Robinson, Britt Barrett, and Kelley Stone.   The Development of Collaboration in Response to Hurricane Katrina in the Dallas area.   *Public Works Management and Policy*.

Scott E. Robinson.   A Decade of Treating Networks Seriously.   *Policy Studies Journal*.

Scott E. Robinson and Floun   say R. Caver.   Punctuated Equilibrium and Congressional Policymaking.   *Political Research Quarterly*.

Scott E. Robinson and Kenneth J. Meier.   Path Dependence and Organizational Behavior: Bureaucracy and Internal Standards.   *American Review of Public Administration*.

Douglas J. Watson and L. Douglas Kiel.   Introduction: Symposium on Natural Disasters and Economic Development   *Economic Development Quarterly*

Douglas J. Watson, Wendy L. Hassett, and Floun   say R. Caver.   Form of Government and Community Values: The Case of Tuskegee, Alabama.   *Politics and Policy*

Books:

Wendy L. Hassett and Douglas J. Watson, forthcoming 2007. *Civic Battles: When Cities Change Their Form of Government*. Academics Press.

Douglas J. Watson and Rollin J. Watson. *Spending a Lifetime: The Careers of City Managers*. University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

7.4 Instructional/Training Activities (presented or received):

- Over a dozen students graduated from the program in 2006. The recent growth in enrollment suggests that even more students will be graduating in future years.
- Many MPA classes moved over to the new classrooms in the Waterview Science and Technology Center. These new classrooms provide excellent spaces for class discussion, presentations, etc.

7.5 Public Service: A key initiative this year involves outreach to local city governments to offer MPA classes on-site for the associated certificate program. This outreach serves to bring more people into MPA classes - hoping that they will desire to stick around for the full MPA degree curriculum.

This program also serves to improve the name recognition of our program in the local community while providing training services to local government employees.

7.6 Other External Activities: While we have some students researching international issues, there no programmatic international activities.

7.7 Contributions to UTD: The Master s program trains many of the region s managers of local government and nonprofit organizations in the skills needed to adapt to a rapidly changing world (Initiative Three). In providing this training, students receive a direct benefit (action 6.1) and build relationships with community organizations (action 6.4) - especially through outreach programs such as the internship workshop. This program seeks to build management capacity to benefit the entire DFW region (Initiative Six).

7.8 Top 3 Program / Unit Challenges: There are two key challenges facing the MPA program.

First, the MPA faces fierce competition from local programs. There are competing programs offered by UNT and UTA. Additionally, the recently established MPP at UTD will compete with the MPA for some students. Additionally, the MPP was designed with a lower number of hours required from graduation - providing it a competitive advantage over the MPA program. The MPA program will have to develop its own brand and competitive advantage over all of these local competitors.

Second, the MPA program is growing just as the PhD program is growing. The combined growth puts tremendous pressure on the faculty. The MPA growth does not present the same challenges that the PhD enrollment growth does (there are no MPA dissertations, or even theses, to advise) but it has to compete for the attention of a small and encumbered faculty.