

2006-2007 :: Ph.D. in Public Affairs**1. Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Ph.D. in Public Affairs program is to prepare students for academic careers or high level management positions in public and non-profit organizations by assuring that they gain competency at an advanced level in the core subject matters and methodologies that are central to the study of Public Affairs. Through instruction and research, the faculty will help students obtain a firm understanding of the broad intellectual tradition of public administration and related fields. It will integrate both traditional and innovative methods of educational delivery and emphasize the application of theory to practice.

2. Objectives:**2.1 Demonstrate Knowledge:**

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the interface between the traditions of public management, decision science, and policy analysis and processes with a practical appreciation for the challenges of maintaining and building institutions of governance and a civic culture in a complex, democratic society.

2.1.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 5. Visual & Performing Arts; 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 12. Guided Research; 15. Research & Design; 16. Independent Thought

2.1.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities; II-3 Investment in People; III-1 Dynamic Change Management

2.1.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-6 Increase Number of PhD's Granted; COM-3 Sustain Progress toward Tier One Status in terms of programs, research and faculty quality; COM-4 Enhance research, graduate education and technology-driven economic development; CPT-3 Significantly improve quality of UTD's graduate students

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

2.2 Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition: Students, as executive level administrators, will have a solid grounding in theory and in the process of knowledge acquisition through research that is essential for institutional maintenance and renewal.

2.2.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 12. Guided Research; 13. Independent Research; 14. Ongoing Research; 15. Research & Design; 16. Independent Thought

2.2.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities; II-3 Investment in People; III-1 Dynamic Change Management

2.2.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-6 Increase Number of PhD's Granted; COM-3 Sustain Progress toward Tier One Status in terms of programs, research and faculty quality; COM-4 Enhance research, graduate education and technology-driven economic development; CPT-3 Significantly improve quality of UTD's graduate students

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

2.3 Produce Scholarly Manuscripts:

Students, as scholars, will have the ability to produce scholarly manuscripts based on extensive practical experience or field-based research that are worthy of publication in the journals of the field.

2.3.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 12. Guided Research; 13. Independent Research; 14. Ongoing Research; 15. Research & Design; 16. Independent Thought

2.3.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities; II-3 Investment in People; III-1 Dynamic Change Management

2.3.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-6 Increase Number of PhD's Granted; COM-3 Sustain Progress toward Tier One Status in terms of programs, research and faculty quality; COM-4 Enhance research, graduate education and technology-driven economic development; CPT-3 Significantly improve quality of UTD's graduate students

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

2.4 Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas: Students will have the ability to develop, present, and defend both orally and in writing complex ideas based on in-depth scholarly research.

2.4.1 Related General Education Outcome Item(s): 11. Advanced Knowledge in Discipline(s); 12. Guided Research; 13. Independent Research; 14. Ongoing Research; 15. Research & Design; 16. Independent Thought

2.4.2 Related Strategic Plan Item(s):

II-1 The Education of Leaders; II-2 Living-Learning Communities; II-3 Investment in People

2.4.3 Related Institutional Priority Item(s):

SP-6 Increase Number of PhD's Granted; COM-3 Sustain Progress toward Tier One Status in terms of programs, research and faculty quality; COM-4 Enhance research, graduate education and technology-driven economic development; CPT-3 Significantly improve quality of UTD's graduate students

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

3. Measures & Findings:

3.1 Short papers:

Students in PA 7320 and PA 7322 will develop a series of short papers demonstrating their understanding of key concepts in the field of Public Affairs.

3.1.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected each semester courses are offered.

3.1.2 Success Criteria: 90% of students in each class will receive 80% or better on the above listed assignment.

3.1.3 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate Knowledge; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.1.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Students in PA 7330 (7320 was a typo) met the success criterion. No data are available for PA 7322.

3.1.5 Numerical Results:

Overall, 90% of students met the success criterion in PA 7330. This overall achievement masked substantial variation - with several assignments having as low as 70% attainment.

3.1.6 Influencing Factors:

Basic writing skills were an issue for the students not attaining the success criterion in PA 7330.

3.1.7 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.1.8 Further Action: Yes

3.2 Group paper:

Students in PA 6352, PA 7305, and PA 7311 will write a group paper reviewing a key area of recent research in decision science, science, and policy analysis and processes.

3.2.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester course is offered.

3.2.2 Success Criteria: 90% of students in each class will receive 80% or better on the above listed assignment.

3.2.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.2.4 Results Related To Success Criteria:

Students in PA 6352 and PA 7311 met the success criterion. Students in PA 7305 did not.

3.2.5 Numerical Results:

Only 80% of students in PA 7305 met the success criterion. While this is high, it is not as high as the goal.

3.2.6 Influencing Factors:

This fits with evidence in the MPA program that some students are having difficulty with the writing assignments.

3.2.7 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.2.8 Further Action: Yes

3.3 Research paper:

Students in PA 7320 and 7338 will develop a research paper demonstrating their understanding of leadership theory as it applies to public management.

3.3.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected each semester.

3.3.2 Success Criteria: 90% of students in each class will receive 80% or better on the above listed assignment.

3.3.3 Related Objective(s):

Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.3.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Students in PA 7330 and 7338 met the success criterion.

3.3.5 Numerical Results: More than 90% of students in both classes met the success criterion.

3.3.6 Influencing Factors:

While students met the criterion, there was a sense in PA 7330 that some students barely met the minimum expectations in their basic writing skills and that skill development in this area would be important before people

are ready to write at a doctoral level.

3.3.7 Achievement Level: Met

3.3.8 Further Action: Yes

3.4 Short analytic papers:

Students in PA 7322 will develop a series of short analytic papers to apply their knowledge of decision making in negotiations to public management problem

3.4.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.4.2 Success Criteria: 90% of students in each class will receive 80% or better on the above listed assignment.

3.4.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.4.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: No data are available for PA 7322

3.4.5 Numerical Results: No data are available for PA 7322

3.4.6 Influencing Factors: No data are available for PA 7322

3.4.7 Achievement Level: Not Met

3.4.8 Further Action: Yes

3.5 Proposal for dissertations:

Students will develop proposals for their dissertations that rely on the vast literature in the field of Public Affairs, that are submitted to the graduate faculty for examination and approval, and that are publicly defended in front of faculty and other graduate students.

3.5.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.5.2 Success Criteria:

100% of students who develop dissertation proposals will be approved by the faculty after public presentations.

3.5.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.5.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: The success criterion was met.

3.5.5 Numerical Results: All students who proposed dissertations successfully defended them.

3.5.6 Achievement Level: Met

3.5.7 Further Action: No

3.6 Course evaluations and self-evaluations:

Students in PA 6352, PA 7305, PA 7311, PA 7322, PA 7330, and PA 7338 will complete self-evaluations that determine whether the objectives for each course have been met.

3.6.1 Success Criteria: 90% of students will conclude that the learning objectives for each course have been met

3.6.2 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition

3.6.3 Results Related To Success Criteria:

Course evaluations are not currently available. The self-evaluation instrument was not available in time for the end of the semester. Faculty were shown the written evaluations that were processed in the program office.

3.6.4 Numerical Results: Course evaluation data are not yet available.

3.6.5 Achievement Level: Not Met

3.6.6 Further Action: Yes

3.7 Research projects:

Students will complete research projects in PA 6352 and PA 7320 that will demonstrate their understanding of research methods in Public Affairs

3.7.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.7.2 Success Criteria:

90% of students will achieve a satisfactory or better rating on research reports for these classes

3.7.3 Related Objective(s):

Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend

Complex Ideas

3.7.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Each class met the success criterion.

3.7.5 Numerical Results: 100% of students in each class met the success criterion.

3.7.6 Achievement Level: Met

3.7.7 Further Action: No

3.8 Scholarly and practice based discussion:

Students will engage in scholarly and practice-based discussions with leading scholars and practitioners in many of the classes.

3.8.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.8.2 Success Criteria:

Each semester, a scholar from an outside institution will give a presentation which will be attended by 50 graduate students.

3.8.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.8.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: No attendance was taken - so numerical assessment is not possible.

3.8.5 Numerical Results:

No attendance was taken - so numerical assessment is not possible. The numerical criterion was not set until after the event. There was a sense that many of the students were at the event featuring Prof. Rohr or Virginia Tech.

3.8.6 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.8.7 Further Action: No

3.9 Develop research manuscript:

Students will be expected to develop at least one manuscript each as the product of their dissertation research and submit it to a peer-reviewed journal for evaluation. Time frame: Within two years after their dissertations have been successfully defended.

3.9.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.9.2 Success Criteria:

Each semester we should have approximately 5 students submit research based papers to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

3.9.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.9.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Attainment is not clear on this objective.

3.9.5 Numerical Results:

We know of four students who have submitted research. However, we are not confident that we necessarily know of all students who submitted work.

3.9.6 Achievement Level: Partially Met

3.9.7 Further Action: Yes

3.10 Oral presentations:

Students in PA 6353, PA 7311, PA 7322, PA 7322 and PA 7338 will have to make one or more oral presentations based on assigned readings or individual or group research activities that will be graded by the professor and discussed by fellow students. Students in PA 6353, PA 7311, and PA 7338 will present research as a group. Students in PA 7322 will conduct simulations of oral negotiations

3.10.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester.

3.10.2 Success Criteria:

90% of student presentations will be determined to be adequate or better by the professor for each course.

3.10.3 Related Objective(s): Demonstrate Knowledge; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.10.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: Students met the success criterion in all classes.

3.10.5 Numerical Results:

Remarkably, each class reported that 100% of students performed satisfactorily in their oral presentations.

3.10.6 Influencing Factors: Students seemed to have the presentation skills they need for public service.

3.10.7 Achievement Level: Met

3.10.8 Further Action: No

3.11 Defend dissertation in public forums:

Following the end of their coursework and the acceptance of their pre-proposal. After their dissertations have been submitted and approved for defense by their doctoral committees.

3.11.1 Assessment Timeframe: Data collected every semester

3.11.2 Success Criteria: 100% of students that defend their dissertations will do so successfully.

3.11.3 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

3.11.4 Results Related To Success Criteria: All students who defended their dissertations were successful.

3.11.5 Numerical Results: All students who defended their dissertations were successful.

3.11.6 Achievement Level: Met

3.11.7 Further Action: No

5. Closing the Loop:

5.1 Course evaluations: We must analyze the course evaluation data when they become available.

5.1.1 Related Objective(s):

Demonstrate Knowledge; Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

5.1.2 Related Measure(s): Course evaluations and self-evaluations

5.1.3 Responsible Person: Scott Robinson

5.1.4 Target Date: Summer 2007

5.1.5 Priority: Medium Priority

5.2 Writing Skills Workshop: We need to offer a writing workshop again and consider expanding its scope.

5.2.1 Related Objective(s): Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

5.2.2 Related Measure(s):

Short papers; Group paper; Research paper; Short analytic papers; Proposal for dissertations; Develop research manuscript

5.2.3 Responsible Person: Doug Watson

5.2.4 Target Date: Fall 2007

5.2.5 Priority: Medium Priority

5.3 Faculty participation in SACS:

Some outcomes could not be assessed because the faculty member responsible for the relevant class did not provide data for SACS assessment. Notably, the one case involved a faculty member whose primary affiliation is not with PA. Either the program director will need additional tools to promote participation in SACS or the program will need to develop core faculty to take over the functions of those faculty currently borrowed from other programs.

5.3.1 Related Objective(s): Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

5.3.2 Related Measure(s): Short analytic papers

5.3.3 Responsible Person: Doug Watson

5.3.4 Target Date: Fall 2007

5.3.5 Priority: Medium Priority

5.4 Data collection improvements:

The program needs to develop a system to better track attainment for two areas: participation in outside speaker presentations and student submission of scholarly papers for publication.

5.4.1 Related Objective(s):

Theory and Process of Knowledge Acquisition; Produce Scholarly Manuscripts; Develop, Present, and Defend Complex Ideas

5.4.2 Related Measure(s): Scholarly and practice based discussion; Develop research manuscript

5.4.3 Responsible Person: Doug Watson

5.4.4 Target Date: Fall 2007

5.4.5 Priority: Medium Priority

6. Analysis:

6.1 Program/Unit Strengths:

6.1.1 Objectives/Outcomes Exceeded or Met: Presentation skills and mastery of the substantive material were strong elements on the program.

6.2 Program / Unit Weaknesses:

6.2.1 Objectives / Outcomes Partially or Not Met: Students need additional work on writing skills. The program will need to implement additional procedures to collect data in a timely fashion on speaker attendance and course evaluations.

6.3 Other Areas Needing Improvement:

There was a sense among the faculty that student were not getting a broad enough exposure to key theories in Public Affairs. As described in the executive summary, the faculty decided to adopt substantial changes to the curriculum to meet these needs.

7. Report:

7.1 Executive Summary: Executive Summary for Public Affairs Program

The programs in Public Affairs continue to manage its recent period of tremendous growth in the graduate programs. As part of this process, the faculty has paid specific attention to the strategic plan for growth of the programs, the development of new programs to sustain growth, curriculum design, and programs to maintain quality as we expand enrollment. In the undergraduate program, enrollment remains steady as the program devoted more resources to the undergraduate curriculum in the form of expanded course offerings taught by graduate students.

The key challenge in the past annual review period has been managing growth in the doctoral program. The Spring of 2007 saw few new enrollments, which is typical of our cohort program design. However, the large cohort who entered the program in the Fall of 2006 continues to put pressure on the faculty to offer sufficient doctoral seminars and the pressure for student dissertation committee service is only now beginning. The Spring of 2007 saw the first of the full size 2005 cohort begin to defend dissertation proposals. This is a good sign that the curriculum is preparing students to write and defend dissertation proposals. It is, however, a warning that as the double-sized cohort of 2007 enters next Spring, there will likely be tremendous demand for dissertation chairs and committee members.

The MPA program has also experienced continued growth. Given the nature of the MPA curriculum, the MPA program is more capable of absorbing this growth and aggressive efforts to expand enrollment continue. The recent development of the MPA in City Hall program has served to expand the enrollment in this MPA and Certificate in Local Government. Work is underway to expand the MPA in City Hall program to include new cities and more cohorts. This is seen as an area where expansion of the enrollment can most effectively contribute to mission of the program and the university without putting inappropriate strain on the still small core faculty.

Spring 2007 saw a series of faculty meetings to reassess the core MPA and PhD curriculum. The faculty anticipates that each curriculum will undergo such revision on a regular basis. The meeting focused on the MPA curriculum revealed that the faculty was generally pleased with the current curriculum design. There was some hope that more of the classes would be taught by core PA faculty – but this depends on the expansion of the core faculty. It was also decided that there should be an expanded orientation process for incoming students (at both the MPA and PhD level) to help students understand the expectations of graduate work in PA and to help address perceived deficiencies in writing skills. The program held its pilot writing workshop in the Spring and had a tremendous turnout – with attendees representing not just PA, but also other units in EPPS.

The faculty meeting focused on the PhD curriculum was more critical of the existing curriculum design. Some faculty voiced concerns about the basic knowledge with which the students come in to the program. Faculty mentioned specifically that there was a sense that students were unfamiliar with important constitutional and legal foundations of public service as well as basic statistical skills. The PhD program draws students from many different educational backgrounds. One unfortunate side effect of this diversity is that many students come in to the program with little or no background in the foundational issues in public affairs. Students coming in to the program with, say, a public health or education background, would not likely be familiar with the basic characteristics of the policy process as was assumed in the design of the current curriculum. The faculty decided that the entry requirement of a statistical course should be enforced more carefully with a strong preference for the statistics class taught within the MPA program. Faculty asked for further consideration for making the MPA policy process class (which includes constitutional and legal foundations of public service) a strict prerequisite.

The faculty also decided to modify significant elements of the current curriculum to create a more obvious hierarchy of courses in the cohort design. Under the new plan, the first year of course work would consist largely of foundational theory and research methodology classes. The second year would consist of advanced subjects, some very practical, and electives that build on the first year's foundations. The third year would consist of capstone seminars and dissertation work. It is hoped that this design will better prepare students with the foundational knowledge needed to prepare high quality research. The faculty plan to implement these changes for the upcoming Fall 2008 cohort.

The undergraduate program has experienced significant changes over the past academic year as well. As the PhD in Public Affairs matures, and more students make their way through the program, more doctoral students join the program full time with an interest in teaching. These graduate students become a resource for teaching undergraduate classes. This has allowed the program to offer more diverse undergraduate classes with greater frequent. As the PhD program draws more students interested in full time enrollment and teaching, we hope to expand this program. There seem to be enough undergraduate students demanding classes to warrant devoting more teaching assistants. It is hoped that as the core PA faculty grows and the explosive growth in the graduate programs moderates, we can devote more faculty resources to the undergraduate program.

The most significant challenge for the PA program is the small core faculty. Having a small core faculty creates difficulties in coordinating course assessment and large class sizes in the graduate classes (as well as the impacts on the undergraduate program just described). Some of the faculty is concerned that doctoral class sizes are roughly twice the ideal size. Doctoral seminars routinely exceed 25 students and sometimes (rarely) exceed 30. Some of the faculty argue that the ideal size would be between 10 and 12 students. The first step to address these concerns is to limit cohort size in future years. It is expected that future cohorts will be kept to approximately twenty students. Second, hiring additional faculty will be essential. With the departure of a core PA faculty member after the summer of 2007, the core faculty is too small to teach the curriculum without borrowing a large number of faculty from other programs. It is hoped that within the next year, the program will be able to hire two new faculty members including at least one at the senior level. Hiring at the tenured level is important to manage the impending wave of dissertation committee service expected to crest in the Spring and summer of 2008. Even if a cap is imposed on PhD enrollment (of around 20 per year) and MPA growth moderates, we expect that we will need to hire 1-2 faculty a year for the next three years just to catch up with growth. It is hoped that this growth will allow the program to teach its curricula without reliance on faculty from other programs (which has led to some of the problems listed under the actions section of this report). In particular, we have historically relied on external faculty to teach classes on statistics and policy. These are classes we would prefer to move inside the core faculty as described earlier.

7.2 Top 3 Program/Unit Accomplishments: 1] The program has continued to grow

2] More students are defending proposals on schedule than before

3] Students seems to be submitting materials for publication with greater frequency than before

7.3 Research Activities or Publications:

Alicia C. Schortgen and Douglas J. Watson. Forthcoming. "First Ring Suburban Leadership: Mayor Pat Evans of Plano, Texas" in Mayors and Board Chairpersons: Reexamining the Contributions of Facilitative Leadership. Edited by James H. Svara. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Wendy L. Hassett and Douglas J. Watson, Civic Battles: When Cities Change Their Forms of Government (Ft. Lauderdale: PrAcademics Press, 2007).

Scott E. Robinson, Floun'say R. Caver, Kenneth J. Meier, and Laurence J. O'Toole Jr. "Explaining Policy Punctuations: Bureaucratization and Budgetary Change." American Journal of Political Science. January 2007.

7.4 Instructional/Training Activities (presented or received): The PA faculty offered its first writing workshop for graduate students. It was a success drawing dozens of students from PA as well as other programs in EPPS. The success has inspired the PA faculty to consider expanding and institutionalizing the workshop - possibly as part of an expanded orientation session in the Fall.

7.5 Public Service:

Most of the students in this program are in-service public servants. The material taught in the program directly impacts the quality of public service in the DFW area.

7.6 Contributions to UTD:

This program contributes to UTD's goals related to the training of leaders for a changing world and improving the quality of life in the North Texas region.

7.7 Top 3 Program / Unit Challenges:

1] The growth in program enrollment has far outpaced faculty hiring resulting in large student/teacher ratio

2] Of the faculty that are affiliated with the program, there are few senior faculty to assist with chairing dissertation committees

3] The curriculum is not meeting the faculties expectations for providing students with a broad background in the literature in Public Affairs

7.8 Detailed Resources Needed to Improve and Fulfill Mission: The faculty has already met to discuss the

curriculum changes to address challenge 3 (with a plan to implement changes in the Fall of 2008). This is discussed in greater detail in the executive summary. The concerns about faculty size are pressing. With the doubling of the cohort size in the Fall of 2007, even if only for one year, there are far too few faculty to adequately over see the dozens of dissertations coming up in the next few years. It is vital that at least two more people be hired focusing on this program (in addition to hires needed in the MPA and BS programs). In order to address the need for more dissertation committee chairs, these hires would need to be at the associate or full professor rank. There would probably need to be at least another hire in each of the following three years to keep pace with continued enrollment. At its current pace, the program will soon face the situation where senior faculty may be asked to chair ten or more dissertations simultaneously. These hires are needed to bring that number down to a level where the faculty can devote the time and attention the dissertations deserve.