



## 2009-2010 Assessment Plan Report

### **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2009-2010**

**Report Date:** June 1, 2010

**School/College:** Business and Professional Studies (BPS)

**Department/Program:** Public Administration

**Person completing the Report:** Larry Brewster, Ph.D.

1. **Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:
  - a. Which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.

The faculty and staff in the Public Administration programs met every two weeks in the AY 2009-2010 to discuss assessment of learning, curriculum, and other program issues in preparation for NASPAA accreditation and continuous improvement of the programs. We focused on the MPA program because NASPAA only accredits graduate programs. In addition, the administration of the new School of Business and Professional Studies is considering significant changes to the undergraduate degree completion programs. It is unclear what, if any, impact this will have on our Bachelor of Public Administration program. A number of changes were made to the program based in part on faculty assessment of student learning (see below). Other changes are expected in fall 2010. All changes have in mind enhanced quality of the program and alignment with BPS and University learning goals.

Based on a review of course learning outcomes and student performance the faculty are considering the following:

- Eliminating MPA 698/688 – Independent Study and in its place adding Comparative Public Administration. We determined that the Independent Study course yielded unsatisfactory student learning and we are interested in developing more of a global or international perspective in the program. Eliminating MPA 698/688 allows for the addition of a three-unit comparative course.
- Eliminating MPA 650 – Integrative Seminar in Public Management and in its place adding an additional quantitative/qualitative course focused on program evaluation. This course would be part of a two or three course sequence that together provides students with greater research and critical thinking skills.



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- The introductory course (MPA 611) will be renamed and structured around themes rather than a more traditional survey course. The new title is: “Public Administration as a Field and Practice in the Contemporary Society.”
- Rename MPA 620 to “Leadership Ethics”. The course will satisfy two of BPS learning goals: ethics and leadership.
- Rename MPA 613 to “Management and Organizational Theory.” This course will be redesigned to better fulfill the communication and leadership learning goals of BPS.
- Rename MPA 670 to “Measurement: Program Analysis and Evaluation.” This course is part of the new sequence of courses designed to provide our students with greater critical thinking and research skills.

In addition, we have selected the Leadership Ethics (MPA 620) and Measurement: Program Analysis and Evaluation (MPA 670) as the first two courses in which specific rubrics will be designed and implemented to measure student learning. These courses cover four of the BPS learning goals: ethics, communication, leadership and critical thinking.

The public administration faculty and staff devoted considerable time this year to developing a mission, vision and program values that will guide program development and are critical to NASPAA accreditation. We developed some assessment tools, e.g., student questionnaires, faculty assignment assessment forms) and recognized much more needs to be done in fall 2010, e.g., developing specific rubrics for the two courses that will be assessed (see above). Finally, a strong sense of community and group decision making resulted from our bi-weekly meetings and commitment to pursuing accreditation.

- b. Who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes.

The Public Administration program director, senior associate director, full-time, and select adjunct faculty comprised the PA program team that participated in the ongoing program review. They were: Drs. Larry Brewster (Director), Michael O’Neill, Catherine Horiuchi, Maury Penner, Monika Hudson, Kathleen Fletcher (MNA Program Director), Tony Ribera (Director of the LEL Institute), Stan Buller (adjunct faculty), and Gleb Nikitenko (Senior Associate Program Director and instructor).



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### 2. Please Answer the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:

#### a. What did you do?

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.).

- During AY2009-2010, the PA faculty and full-time staff met on a regular basis to start the process of program self-assessment in preparation for the NASPAA accreditation. All program learning outcomes were reviewed though not fully assessed. The process is ongoing and involves full-time and select adjunct faculty and staff.
- We selected for learning assessment two courses: MPA 620 – Leadership Ethics and MPA 670 – Measurement: Program Analysis and Evaluation to be done in fall 2010. We will develop and implement learning rubrics for these two courses.
- PA 352 (Public Policy Analysis) course curriculum was fully redesigned, deployed, and tested successfully in spring of 2010.
- PA 623 (Economics and Finance) course curriculum was partially re-designed including course learning outcomes, major assignments, and other means of assessment following the course faculty meeting in November of 2009.
- PA 611 and 613 (foundational courses in the MPA program) are in the process of major revision (two task forces were formed), including the courses' philosophies, learning outcomes, required reading materials, and titles.
- PA 362 (Legal Responsibilities) course was partially re-designed, including the selection of a new text.
- PA 366 (Emerging Developments) course was partially re-designed to emphasize the end-of-program assessment of basic skills through written assignments and analysis of case studies.
- Active outreach to our alumni to engage them in career and internship development for our students as well as feedback on the program.

#### b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

It has become evident that the PA programs (especially MPA) will require extensive revision, including curriculum, learning outcomes, assessment instruments, and format/ scheduling. Full-time and adjunct faculty members continue to express concerns about the level and quality of student writing and presentation skills. We have selected two courses in which specific learning assessment tools will be deployed and the data analyzed. They will serve as models for future learning assessment in the other courses.



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c. **What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?**

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

The WASC direct measure assessment worksheet (attached) will be used as one of the evaluation methods to assess student learning connected with course and program learning goals/ outcomes. PA faculty are considering piloting the worksheet in the fall of 2010 in the select courses (most likely in MPA 613 and 620); the data and feedback collected will become one of the components of the program electronic data portfolio and assessment database.

Attached are the samples of the end-of-program student questionnaire, MPA 650 Capstone pre-course assessment/ questionnaire, and the WASC evidence assessment sheet.

Attachments: Revised PA program documents.