

Master of Arts in Public Leadership Program
College of Arts & Sciences, University of San Francisco
Assessment Report for Academic Year 2024-2025
Due Date: December 15, 2025

1. Identifying Information

Name of program and degree type: Master of Arts in Public Leadership (MAPL)

Type of Program: Graduate Degree

Submitters:

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2. Mission Statement

The mission of the Master of Arts in Public Leadership program is to foster a learning community where service-oriented students from across the ideological spectrum, particularly veterans and military families, together with faculty, can build on their leadership and public service experience, engage in productive political dialogue, and emerge as ethical and strategic public leaders. The curriculum blends theory and practice and equips students for a *Second Service* in public office, legislative affairs, campaign management, advocacy, and civic leadership.

This mission statement has not been updated since the last assessment cycle.

3. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Demonstrate advanced skills in writing, research, statistics, analysis, and oral presentation suitable for political and policy professionals
2. Comprehend theoretical models and concepts of democratic participation and accountability, as well as current policy challenges, and demonstrate the capacity to apply these lessons in real-world settings
3. Apply knowledge gained in the classroom to various political settings in the community
4. Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process in an ethical manner

- 5. Interact with politicians as well as professionals from fields including campaigns, advocacy, community organizing, strategic communications, public policy, and public service

The PLOs have not been updated since the last assessment cycle.

4. Current Curricular Map

Since the last assessment, no new courses were added. Current curricular maps have been submitted with this assessment, and can be viewed at the following links:

- [PLOxILO Curricular Map January 2021](#)
- [PLOxCourse Curricular Map January 2021](#)

5. Assessment Schedule

The following annual assessment schedule is flexible and may be modified based upon our findings, but in any case will enable us to comprehensively assess our PLOs prior to our first Academic Program Review (APR), which we expect to occur in 2030.

- 2020 - Remote/Distance Learning
- 2021 - PLO 1 (Direct)
- 2022 - PLO 3 & 5 (Indirect)
- 2023 - PLO 2 (Direct)
- 2025 - PLO 4 (Direct)
- 2026 - PLO 1 (TBD)
- 2027 - PLO 3 (Direct)
- 2028 - PLO 5 (Direct)
- 2029 - PLO 2 (TBD)
- 2030 – APR

6. Description of Assessment Methodology

PLO-4: *Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process in an ethical manner*

For purposes of review, this learning outcome was divided into three segments for assessment, segment 1A and 1B address the first component of PLO-4, focusing on understanding political power and aggregating interests, and segment 2 addresses the second part of PLO-4 concerning ethical and legal considerations in influencing the political process.

PLO-4 SEGMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

PLO-4: Segment 1A	Understand the nature of political power (identifying an audience and their interests)
PLO-4: Segment 1B	Understand the nature of mechanisms for aggregating interests and how to influence the process

PLO-4: Segment 2	How to influence the process of aggregating interests and political power in an ethical manner
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Samples of student work were randomly selected from designated assignments across four required core courses in the curriculum. This process placed particular emphasis on core courses, recognizing that an expanding elective portfolio has increased variability in student learning and necessitates greater focus on foundational concepts within required coursework. For course-based assignments, five to six randomly selected student samples were reviewed per class. All capstone presentations were included in the review. The selected assignments represent a range of complexity and are drawn from courses that students take at different points in the program, allowing the assessment to capture variation in student development over time.

PLO-4 STUDENT WORK REVIEWED

PLO-4 Segment	Course	Assignment	Student Samples
Segment 1A	MPL 603 Quantitative Methods (Section 02)	Final Memo	5
Segment 1B	MPL 602 Writing for Public Policy (Sections 01 & 02)	Op-Ed	6 (3 per section)
Segment 2	MPL 605 Civil–Military Relations (Sections 01 & 02)	Policy Memo / Op-Ed / Case Study	6 (3 per section)
PLO-4 Overall	MPL 609 Capstone in Public Leadership	Final Presentations	All (6 presentations)

Segment 1A: Understanding the Nature of Political Power (Audience and Interests)

For segment 1A of PLO-4, five samples were taken from the final memo from MPL 603-02 Quantitative Methods in Public Policy, which required students to produce a political strategy memo to either the Democratic or Republican Party. Students used historical election and exit poll data to identify key demographic or geographic audiences, articulate constituent interests, and propose a data-informed electoral strategy, supported by at least one data visualization and one data table. This assignment was selected because it requires students to identify political audiences, articulate and interpret constituent interests, and translate analysis into a realistic strategic framework.

Segment 1B: Mechanisms for Aggregating Interests and Influencing the Process

For segment 1B of PLO-4, six samples were drawn from the Op-Ed assignment in MPL 602 Writing for Public Policy, three from each of the two sections, in which students developed and

drafted an op-ed targeted to a specific publication. The assignment required students to define a clear audience, articulate a persuasive thesis, anticipate counterarguments, and structure an argument designed to influence public discourse and decision-makers. This assignment was selected because it directly assesses students' ability to match an issue to a relevant and persuadable audience and to employ persuasive strategies appropriate to the medium to influence the process.

Segment 2: Ethical and Legal Dimensions of Political Influence

For segment 2 of PLO-4, six samples, three from each of two sections, were drawn from MPL 605 Civil–Military Relations, where students completed either a policy memo, op-ed, or case study examining ethical and legal constraints related to the politicization of the military. Assignments required students to evaluate historical and contemporary cases, identify integrity and legality concerns, and propose recommendations within established ethical and institutional limits. This assignment was selected because it foregrounds ethical considerations and legal limitations in political advocacy and institutional influence.

Capstone Assessment

In addition to course-based assignments which focused on segments of PLO-4, final presentations from MPL 609 Capstone in Public Leadership were reviewed against PLO-4 in its entirety. The review was broken into two rubrics, to assess segments 1 (1A & 1B) and 2 discretely. The capstone represents the culmination of student learning in the program and allowed evaluators to assess integrated application of audience analysis, interest aggregation, persuasive strategy, and ethical judgment.

Distinct rubrics for each of the three segments were created and applied to relevant student work. Two additional rubrics, based holistically on PLO-4 overall and specific ethical considerations, were used to assess a selection of student capstone presentations.

Rubrics for review of PLO-4 segments and selected assignments

Distinct rubrics for each of the three segments were created and applied to relevant student work. Two additional rubrics were created to review segments 1 and 2 within student capstone work.

PLO-4 Segment 1A: Understand the nature of political power (Can they identify an audience and their interests?)

Assignment: *MPL 603-02 - Final Memo - Fall 2024*

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Uses data effectively within political context to illustrate	Selects highly relevant, accurate, and credible data and integrates it seamlessly into a political	Uses mostly relevant and credible data but may overlook some key information or	Uses limited, partially relevant, or inconsistently credible data. Demonstrates	Uses little to no data, or the data used is irrelevant, inaccurate, or unsupported.	The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated

<p>realistic strategy</p>	<p>analysis.</p> <p>Demonstrates clear understanding of how data interacts with political dynamics, constraints, and stakeholder interests.</p> <p>Uses data to justify a strategy that is both realistic and actionable within the political environment.</p> <p>Communicates findings and strategic implications with precision, nuance, and strong analytical reasoning.</p>	<p>context.</p> <p>Shows a general understanding of political dynamics but may not fully connect data to constraints or stakeholder interests.</p> <p>Proposes a strategy that is plausible but may lack full realism, depth, or feasibility.</p> <p>Communicates data and implications clearly but with some gaps in analysis or application.</p>	<p>a basic awareness of political context but connections between data and politics are superficial or underdeveloped.</p> <p>Strategy is vague, overly broad, or only loosely tied to the data presented.</p> <p>Communication shows emerging understanding but lacks coherence or analytic rigor.</p>	<p>Shows minimal or incorrect understanding of political dynamics or constraints.</p> <p>Strategy is unrealistic, unsupported, or missing altogether.</p> <p>Communication is unclear, disorganized, or does not reflect understanding of how data informs strategy.</p>	<p>work.</p>
<p>Accurately identify target audiences for the respective party, utilizing both creativity and solid data analysis</p>	<p>Precisely identifies highly relevant target audiences based on strong, credible data analysis.</p> <p>Integrates demographic, behavioral, and political data with creative insight to surface</p>	<p>Identifies generally appropriate target audiences supported by reasonable data analysis.</p> <p>Shows some creative thinking, though insights may be uneven or obvious.</p> <p>Demonstrates</p>	<p>Identifies broad or partially relevant audience groups using limited or superficial data.</p> <p>Creativity is minimal or inconsistently applied.</p> <p>Shows only basic</p>	<p>Fails to identify plausible or relevant target audiences.</p> <p>Uses little, inaccurate, or irrelevant data; no meaningful analysis is present.</p> <p>Shows misunderstanding or lack of awareness of</p>	<p>The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.</p>

	<p>nuanced or overlooked audience segments.</p> <p>Demonstrates clear understanding of how identified audiences align with the party's goals, values, and strategic needs.</p> <p>Provides well-supported rationale that blends evidence and original thinking.</p>	<p>a solid but not comprehensive understanding of the party's strategic needs or audience alignment.</p> <p>Provides rationale with some evidence, though connections could be more compelling or deeply analyzed.</p>	<p>understanding of how audiences connect to the party's goals or message.</p> <p>Rationale is vague, weakly supported, or overly simplistic.</p>	<p>party strategy or audience alignment.</p> <p>Provides little to no justification or relies on assumptions rather than evidence.</p>	
<p>Accurately identify the interests of the audience, particularly within key demographic or geographic subgroups</p>	<p>Precisely identifies the interests, motivations, and concerns of the audience, including nuanced differences across demographic or geographic subgroups.</p> <p>Uses high-quality data, research, and contextual knowledge to accurately differentiate subgroup interests.</p> <p>Demonstrates</p>	<p>Identifies generally accurate interests for the audience and major subgroups, supported by reasonable data or observations.</p> <p>Recognizes some subgroup distinctions but may miss finer-grained or emerging differences.</p> <p>Shows a solid but not comprehensive understanding of how subgroup</p>	<p>Identifies broad or partially relevant audience interests with limited differentiation between subgroups.</p> <p>Uses minimal or surface-level data; analysis may rely too heavily on assumptions or generalizations .</p> <p>Demonstrates a basic awareness of subgroup variation but</p>	<p>Fails to identify relevant or accurate audience interests.</p> <p>Does not meaningfully address demographic or geographic subgroups, or misinterprets them entirely.</p> <p>Uses little to no evidence; analysis is unsupported or incorrect.</p> <p>Rationale is missing or reflects a fundamental</p>	<p>The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.</p>

	<p>clear understanding of how subgroup interests influence engagement, messaging, or strategic choices.</p> <p>Provides a well-supported, insightful analysis that reflects both depth and accuracy.</p>	<p>interests shape behavior or strategy.</p> <p>Provides a rationale that is mostly supported but may lack depth or precision.</p>	<p>with incomplete or simplistic connections.</p> <p>Rationale is underdeveloped, loosely supported, or insufficiently tied to subgroup characteristics.</p>	<p>misunderstanding of audience dynamics.</p>	
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PLO-4 Segment 1B: Understand the nature of mechanisms for aggregating interests and how to influence the process

Assignment: *MPL 602-01 & -02 - OpEd / Outline - Fall 2024*

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Are you addressing an actionable element of a policy or political issue?	Clearly identifies a specific, actionable component of the issue; focuses on a concrete lever for change; maintains clear feasibility within the Op-Ed format.	Identifies an actionable element, though scope may be somewhat broad or underdeveloped; actionability is present but not fully refined.	Addresses the policy or issue in general terms with only partial or vague actionability; may gesture toward action without clarity.	Fails to identify an actionable element; discussion is abstract, unfocused, or unrelated to policy mechanics.	The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.
Matches the topic to a relevant and persuadable audience	Selects a clearly defined, highly relevant audience that is genuinely persuadable; aligns tone,	Audience is appropriate and somewhat persuadable, though definition or alignment may lack precision;	Audience is broad, loosely relevant, or only partially persuadable; limited tailoring of tone or	Audience is unclear, irrelevant, or not persuadable; little to no evidence of audience	The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.

	framing, and content directly to that audience's values and context.	framing is generally suitable but not fully targeted.	content.	consideration.	
Makes strong arguments that particularly appeal to the persuadable elements of the audience, including articulating the opposing argument	Presents compelling, well-supported arguments tailored to audience motivations; acknowledges opposing views accurately and respectfully; offers persuasive rebuttals.	Arguments are generally sound and supported, with some tailoring to the audience; opposing argument is mentioned but not deeply analyzed or effectively addressed.	Arguments are basic, uneven, or weakly supported; limited tailoring to audience; opposing argument is oversimplified or poorly integrated.	Arguments are unsupported, irrelevant, or ineffective; no recognition of opposing view or mischaracterizes it.	The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.

PLO-4 Segment 2: How to influence the process of aggregating interests and political power in an ethical manner

Assignment: *MPL 605-01 & -02 - Policy Memo/OpEd/Case Study - Spring 2025*

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Identify legal limitations on political action and apply them to practical scenarios	Accurately identifies all relevant legal constraints; applies them with precision to the scenario; demonstrates clear understanding of practical implications and boundaries.	Identifies most relevant legal constraints; application is generally correct but may lack depth or miss subtleties of how laws affect the scenario.	Identifies a few legal constraints but with gaps, oversimplification, or partial relevance; application to the scenario is basic or uneven.	Misidentifies, misunderstands, or omits key legal limitations; application is incorrect, irrelevant, or absent.	The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work. Cannot be assessed from the submitted work.

<p>Identify issues of integrity perception which may be liabilities in practical political scenarios</p>	<p>Insightfully identifies potential integrity risks and reputational liabilities; shows strong awareness of how actions could be perceived by stakeholders ; provides nuanced assessment.</p>	<p>Identifies main integrity concerns with reasonable accuracy; recognizes likely stakeholder perceptions but may overlook some significant risks.</p>	<p>Identifies only obvious or surface-level integrity issues; demonstrates limited understanding of how actions may be interpreted.</p>	<p>Fails to identify meaningful integrity concerns; shows little awareness of how actions affect public or stakeholder perception.</p>	<p>The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.</p>
<p>Can produce original ideas within the context of the legal and ethical considerations</p>	<p>Generates creative, well-reasoned ideas that fully respect legal and ethical constraints; demonstrate s innovation that remains realistic and compliant.</p>	<p>Produces workable ideas with some originality; mostly aligns with legal and ethical standards but may lack sophistication or full integration.</p>	<p>Ideas show limited creativity; may loosely account for legal/ethical factors but with notable gaps or inconsistencies .</p>	<p>Ideas are unoriginal, impractical, or disregard legal or ethical boundaries; shows little creative or compliant thinking.</p>	<p>The learning outcome cannot be evaluated due to missing, incomplete, or unrelated work.</p>

Capstone Review

PLO-4 Segment 1: Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process

Assignment: *MPL 609-01 - Final Presentation - Fall 2024*

	1. Strong	2. Adequate	3. Partially Adequate	4. Inadequate	Not Applicable
<p>To what extent does this project display the student's understanding</p>	<p>Indicates understanding of political power, how</p>	<p>Indicates understanding of political power and how it is gathered</p>	<p>Indicates either an understanding of political power and how it is gathered or how</p>	<p>Does not display understanding of political power and how</p>	<p>This Capstone does not address any questions of aggregating</p>

of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process?	it is gathered, and how it can be influenced	but does not have a connection to how it can be influenced, even if both components are identified	to influence the process but not both	it is gathered nor how to influence the process	political power/interest or influencing political processes
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PLO-4 Segment 2: How to influence the process of aggregating interests and political power in an ethical manner

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Other
Does this project handle power ethically?	This student has sought and identified ethical questions within the project and has addressed them	This student has identified some ethical questions within the project but has not thoroughly addressed them	This student has not identified ethical questions within the project or has dismissed any concerns without examination	Please enclose further comments below

Rubrics: Reviewed Assignments

PLO-4 Segment 1A: Understand the nature of political power (Can they identify an audience and their interests?)

This rubric shows the reviewer ratings for the final memos from five randomly selected students from 12 students in MPL 603-02, Quantitative Methods.

- Students # 7, 1, 6, 5, 12
- Reviewers A & B

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Uses data effectively within political context to illustrate	12_A	6_A 7_A 5_B 7_B 12_B	1_A 5_A 1_B 6_B		

realistic strategy					
Accurately identify target audiences for the respective party, utilizing both creativity and solid data analysis	7_A 12_A 7_B 12_B	5_A 6_A 5_B	1_A 1_B 6_B		
Accurately identify the interests of the audience, particularly within key demographic or geographic subgroups	7_A 12_A 7_B 5_B 12_B	5_A 6_A	1_A 6_B	1_B	

PLO-4 Segment 1B: Understand the nature of mechanisms for aggregating interests and how to influence the process

This rubric shows the reviewer ratings for the OpEd assignments from six randomly selected students across two sections of MPL602, Writing for Public Policy. 3 of 25 students in 602-01 and 3 of 20 total students in MPL 602-02 were selected for review.

- Students # 20, 13, 7 (602-01), 11, 15, 1 (602-02)
- Reviewers A & B

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Are you addressing an actionable element of a policy or political issue?	13_A 11_A 13_B 20_B 11_B	7_A 20_A 1_A 15_A 1_B 15_B	7_B		

Matches the topic to a relevant and persuadable audience	1_A 11_A 11_B 15_B	13_A 15_A 13_B 1_B	7_A 20_A 7_B 20_B		
Makes strong arguments that particularly appeal to the persuadable elements of the audience, including articulating the opposing argument	13_A 11_A 13_B 11_B	7_A 1_A 15_A 7_B 1_B 15_B	20_A 20_B		

PLO-4 Segment 2: How to influence the process of aggregating interests and political power in an ethical manner

This rubric shows the reviewer ratings for the selected Policy Memo/OpEd/Case Study assignments from six randomly selected students across two sections of MPL605, Civil-Military Relations. 3 of 16 students in 605-01 and 3 of 20 total students in MPL 605-02 were selected for review.

- Students # 5, 9, 6 (605-01), 16, 11, 12 (605-02)
- Reviewers A & B

	1: Mastery	2: Developing	3: Introductory	4: Insufficient	N/A
Identify legal limitations on political action and apply them to practical scenarios	6_B	5_A 6_A 12_A 5_B 9_B 12_B	9_A	11_A 11_B 16_B 16_A	6_B
Identify issues of integrity perception which may be	5_A 5_B 12_B	6_A 9_A 12_A	11_A 11_B	16_B 16_A	5_A 5_B 12_B

liabilities in practical political scenarios		6_B 9_B			
Can produce original ideas within the context of the legal and ethical considerations	5_A 12_A 5_B 12_B	6_A 9_A 6_B 9_B	11_A 11_B		5_A 12_A 5_B 12_B

PLO-4 Segment 1: Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process

This rubric shows the reviewer ratings for the final Capstone Presentation projects from MPL 609, Capstone in Public Leadership. All 6 students in that course were evaluated by at least one of four reviewers.

- **Students: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**
- **Reviewers: A, B, C, D**

	1. Strong - indicates understanding of political power, how it is gathered, and how it can be influenced	2. Adequate - indicates understanding of political power and how it is gathered but does not have a connection to how it can be influenced, even if both components are identified	3. Partially Adequate - indicates either an understanding of political power and how it is gathered or how to influence the process but not both	4. Inadequate - does not display understanding of political power and how it is gathered nor how to influence the process	Not Applicable - this Capstone does not address any questions of aggregating political power/interest or influencing political processes
To what extent does this project display the student's understanding of political power, mechanisms	1_A 1_B 1_D 2_A 2_C 2_D 5_A	2_B 4_B			3_B 4_A 6_A

for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process?	5_B 5_D				
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Summary of qualitative responses from reviewers: Projects with Strong ratings typically utilized a wide array of political tools, from fundraising to messaging to polling to navigating systems of stakeholders, which displayed a comprehensive understanding of how to aggregate and influence political power. Projects with Adequate ratings typically utilized some levers of political power, but either didn't build comprehensive connections between them to indicate mastery of the tools. In projects which were rated Not Applicable engaged with other aspects of the program but reviewers did not judge that they engaged with the particular levers of political power outlined in this learning outcome.

PLO-4 Segment 2: How to influence the process of aggregating interests and political power in an ethical manner

This rubric shows the reviewer ratings for the final Capstone Presentation projects from MPL 609, Capstone in Public Leadership. All 6 students in that course were evaluated by at least one of four reviewers.

- **Students:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- **Reviewers:** A, B, C, D

	Yes - This student has sought and identified ethical questions within the project and has addressed them	Somewhat - This student has identified some ethical questions within the project but has not thoroughly addressed them	No - This student has not identified ethical questions within the project or has dismissed any concerns without examination	Other
Does this project handle power ethically?	1_B 1_D 3_B 4_A 4_B 5_D 6_A	1_A 2_A 2_B 2_C 5_B	5_A	2_D

Summary of qualitative responses from reviewers: Projects with Yes ratings discussed the impacts on an array of stakeholders from a variety of perspectives to ensure ethical

considerations were balanced and assumptions about the impact or social good of a proposal did not go unchallenged. Projects with a Somewhat rating touched on ethical questions but failed to weigh the nuances of them. The “Other” rating evoked a particularly thoughtful response from one reviewer who weighed that the project was “pursuing fairness and justice – [and] it absolutely “handled power ethically”” however within it there were assumptions made about how certain elected officials would behave ethically and that that assumption could have better been explored or tested. This observation in particular highlighted the tension within work that is toward a goal that has deep ethical roots, but may still struggle internally to maintain ethical frameworks in all its tactical aspects.

7. Discussion of Assessment Results

In reviewing student work across core coursework and the capstone to assess Program Learning Outcome 4 (Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process in an ethical manner), we observed evidence of student growth over the course of the program, as well as variation in levels of mastery across the three segments of the learning outcome.

Segment 1A: Understanding the Nature of Political Power

Student work from MPL 603 Quantitative Methods demonstrated that students were generally able to identify political audiences and articulate constituent interests within a given electoral context. Students showed a strong qualitative understanding of political power, audience segmentation, and the aggregation of interests. However, performance was weaker in the application of quantitative data to illustrate realistic political strategy. In several cases, it was difficult to disentangle students’ conceptual understanding of what the data suggested from their ability to independently use data to generate original analysis. As this is a required course taken at different points in the curriculum, these results suggest that students are developing foundational understanding, though additional reinforcement of tactical application may be beneficial.

Segment 1B: Mechanisms for Aggregating Interests and Influencing the Process

Review of op-ed assignments from MPL 602 Writing for Public Policy revealed a wide range of performance, reflecting both the introductory nature of the course and variation in students’ writing experience. Many students demonstrated strong engagement with their topics; however, the ability to consistently identify actionable elements of an issue and to frame arguments aimed at persuadable audiences was uneven. Students often expressed strong convictions but had difficulty translating advocacy into persuasive strategies designed to influence decision-making. Comparison with capstone work suggests that these skills strengthen over the course of the program.

Segment 2: Ethical and Legal Dimensions of Political Influence

Assessment of student work from MPL 605 Civil–Military Relations was shaped by variation in assignment format. Students who completed the Policy Memo or Op-Ed option generally demonstrated a developing to mastery-level understanding of ethical and legal considerations related to political influence. In contrast, the Case Study option did not consistently require the

same level of critical analysis or original ethical reasoning, and weaker samples were disproportionately drawn from this option. These findings suggest that the particular design of this assignment is undermining student's development on ethical competencies.

Capstone Review

Overall, students demonstrated higher levels of competency in their capstone presentations than in earlier coursework, indicating growth in their understanding of political power and interest aggregation. Students generally performed well in articulating how political power could be leveraged to achieve desired outcomes. Ethical considerations, however, were addressed less consistently. Approximately half of the capstone reviews indicated that students clearly identified and engaged ethical questions within their projects. In several cases, projects grounded in values of fairness and justice nonetheless relied on unexamined assumptions about ethical behavior, highlighting ongoing tension between ethical intent and ethical execution.

8. Integrating Assessment Results into the Curriculum

We are encouraged by student progress in understanding political power and mechanisms for aggregating interests and do not anticipate major curricular changes in these areas at this time. Where additional reinforcement of tactical application may be beneficial, we believe that elective coursework provides appropriate specialized opportunities for students to develop and apply learning outcomes in ways that are most relevant to their own goals.

Upon examining the second segment of the PLO, this assessment highlights opportunities to strengthen ethical reasoning across the program. The inconsistencies in the reviewed assignment in MPL 605 Civil-Military Relations have been raised with course instructors to ensure assignments are better aligned with program learning outcomes of critical analysis and original thought, with particular emphasis on ethical questions.

More broadly, we plan to explore additional opportunities to integrate ethical leadership more intentionally throughout core coursework (including MPL 621 American Democracy Overview, MPL 608 Public Policy Challenges, and MPL 623 Fundraising and Budgeting) and to reinforce its importance within the capstone process.

As the program continues to evolve and alumni pursue a wide range of pathways to effect change, we will continue to examine how the curriculum balances politics, policy, and other approaches to leadership in service of the program's core values and learning outcomes.