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**Draft Management**

- Check the "Make Report Visible To School And COPRA (Draft Ready)" box when you are ready for the report to be viewed externally.
- Do not click the "Submit and Lock Site Visit Report" button until you are completely finished with the report; you will no longer be able to edit the report after this button is checked and the report is saved.

**Make Report Visible To School And COPRA (Draft Ready)** Yes

**Submit and Lock Site Visit Report** No

**SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION:**

1. List Members of site visit team, with Title and University
2. Dates of the site visit
3. Upload of Site Visit Schedule

**Names of Site Visit Team**

Jack W. Meek, Professor of Public Administration, Director, MPA Program, University of La Verne  
G.L.A. Harris, Associate Professor of Public Administration, Portland State University  
Stephen M. Fuller, City Manager, Mt. Lebanon, PA

**Site Visit Start Date** 03/21/2012

**Site Visit End Date** 03/23/2012

**Site Visit Schedule**

**SECTION 2 BACKGROUND AND MISSION**

In Section 2, The Site Visit Team should indicate whether the program's mission and related activities are appropriate for providing professional education for leadership in public service. The Site Visit Team should provide COPRA with information about the particular mission of the program, the general approach to carrying out that mission, and the procedures for periodic self-evaluation and planning relating to the program's Universal Competencies. The Site Visit Team should provide COPRA with information on the program's progress on the Universal Competencies they did not choose to discuss in their Self-Study report as well as their Mission Specific Required and Elective Competencies.

(Due to the online nature of the format and to reduce on redundancy, SVTs will be asked to comment on Standards 1 and 5 in Section 2 and provide any information they would have under Section 3 in this section.)

Instructions:

For each Standard (in either Section 2 or Section 3) the program will check the appropriate box (Cited by COPRA; Cited by SVT; Have Concerns; Have No Concerns). Site Visitors are required to provide information in the text boxes below each Standard regarding any Standard that is cited by COPRA in the Interim Report. The SVT may have concerns regarding a Standard that were not cited by COPRA, if this is the case the SVT should indicate they have a concern with the Standard and provide information to COPRA regarding their concern. (If there is a Standard not cited by COPRA and the program has no concerns with the Standard the SVT does not need to provide any commentary in the text box but should check the Have No Concerns box).

### **State the program's Mission**

USF MPA Mission

Preamble

We offer demanding programs focused on government and nonprofit management. Since 1978, our Master of Public Administration program has provided exceptional teaching, relevant research and dedicated service to the profession and greater community. This draws on 470 years of Jesuit tradition and 155 years of value-centered education at the University of San Francisco, imparting perspective through our global network of universities, faculty, students, and public-private partnerships.

Mission

We prepare our graduates for public leadership by advancing a challenging curriculum while pursuing complementary research, transforming learning into acts of consequence to serve our communities, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Vision

Our diverse graduates become outstanding leaders who provide ethical, workable solutions to societal needs and advance justice.

Values

We are committed to:

â€¢ Social Justice for all people.

â€¢ Diversity in all its forms.

â€¢ Integrity in all we do.

â€¢ Accountability to all we serve.

Excellence in academic programs, teaching, research and student services.

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**1.1 Mission Statement: The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including**

- Its purpose and public service values, given the program's particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy
- The population of students, employers, and professionals the Program intends to serve, and
- The contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.

### **Standard 1.1 Status**

Cited by COPRA

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### **Standard 1.1 Comments**

The commission seeks information on the manner in which the needs of employers were considered in developing the mission statement and how the population of employers is considered in guiding the performance of the program.

In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as outlined in the COPRA Interim Report indicated that the needs of employers were considered through current students, adjunct faculty, guest speakers and full time faculty, who are currently richly connected with employers. A listing of faculty boards, guest speakers were provided to the SVT as evidence of how the program is connected with a diversity of public and non-profit employers in the San Francisco region.

Information regarding the process of how the program's development of its mission was revised in light of the merging of the MPA program as part of the School of Management was inconsistent. In some areas of the SSR, the alumni and employers were mentioned as part of the process yet in one area of the SSR, employers were mentioned as never being part of the process. It was later ascertained that alumni surveys are administered annually although this is a recent exercise. Although not as standardized, employers were consulted as part of the development of the program's mission. However, feedback of employers on whether or not students are demonstrating the learning outcomes of the program, are not assessed as a direct measure. One reason provided that there is really no standardized way to gauge employers' views on certain subjects, in this case, the development of the program's mission, is because most, if not all of the program's students are employed. Further, there is a USF-wide survey upon students' graduation to secure such information. Results of this survey for the USF MPA program were made available to the SVT.

## **1.2 Performance Expectations: The Program will establish observable program goals, objectives and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.**

### **Standard 1.2 Status**

Cited by COPRA

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### **Standard 1.2 Comments**

The Commission seeks information on how the program has established observable goals, objectives and outcomes to match the program mission of "transforming learning into acts of consequence to serve our communities, especially those most vulnerable among us."

The Commission seeks information about the population of students, employers and professionals that the program intends to serve and how these satisfy the program mission. In other words, who are the students, and what kinds of industries do they come from and return to? How do their ultimate placements and duties objectively reflect the particular elements of the mission approved by the program?

The Commission further seeks information about specific program goals and how they advance knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration and policy and how these satisfy the program's particularly stated mission.

In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as listed in the COPRA Interim Report offered course-based evidence on readings and assignments dedicated to the objectives of "transforming learning into acts of consequence to serve communities." These kinds of objectives were validated in syllabi made available to the SVT. The response also included evidence of the kinds of positions and fields students at USF hold when they come to USF as well as where they return.

Reporting on student profiles was made available to the SVT and it is clear that most students attending USF hold positions in public, health and non-profit service. Program evidence regarding the advancement of knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration and policy was also listed in the response to COPRA covering faculty profiles of coverage in each of the contribution domains. As for student assessment, the program relies on a course where "career portfolios" are developed and assessment of student goals and interests reflecting the program mission is provided. Examples of faculty evidence and student portfolios were provided to the SVT.

**1.3 Program Evaluation: The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program's mission and the Program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.**

**Standard 1.3 Status**

Cited by COPRA

**Standard 1.3 Comments**

The Commission requests further information about how the program links performance outcomes to the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy related to your mission.

The Commission seeks further information about how the results of the program's ongoing assessments are incorporated into program operations to improve student learning, and particularly faculty productivity and graduate careers.

In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as listed in the COPRA Interim Report provided summarized faculty profiles focused on achievements and activities related to program performance interests.

While there is no systematic and formal measurement of program goal linkages to faculty performance, it is clear that faculty and students live their mission. Based on SVT interviews with faculty and students, the assignments that focus on case illustrations and papers indicate a mission-based approach. In addition, the syllabi made available to the SVT indicate a focus on the mission reflected in the assignments and reading. A clear indicator of focus on program mission concerns can be found in the capstone course where significant emphasis is placed on student achievement and program objectives.

In regard to external reviews and assessment, the SVT was informed that the University programs are reviewed by external sources at least once every 5 years. Under the former College of Professional Services in which the MPA program was housed prior to its move to the School of Management, there was an advisory board with representation from all of the stakeholders of the program, including local politicians. The MPA program has recently established a new advisory board of stakeholders who have met only once. However, the advisory board, which also includes recent graduates, is scheduled to meet regularly on a quarterly basis.

From the site team's interview with the Interim Dean, he outlined an ambitious vision for the School and has been making several changes in an attempt to make the merger of the two entities (formerly the College of Professional Studies in which the MPA program was housed and the School of Business and Management) into the School of Management into one culture. In doing so, he stated that he has executed a number of steps to enhance the School. These steps will enhance the MPA program as a renewed focus on Alumni Relations and Career Services will be directly emphasized.

To continually assess the program information is being secured from students as well as faculty. A new Program Evaluation (PA 680) course is being added to the curriculum to replace the Independent/Direct Study (PA 688/698) course. Attempts are being made to make this review more systematic.

For USF, the capstone course is the medium through which the MPA program also determines whether or not students can demonstrate a mastery of the learning outcomes of the program's curriculum. This is an opportunity to determine what the students have learned in the program. The PA 650 (Integrated Experience) is one of the exercises in the capstone experience. This is a reflective exercise. The PA 688/698 or Independent/Directed Study component of the program or cumulative experience component is being replaced by the PA 680 (Program Evaluation) course.

The program is currently assessing the effectiveness of the program's capstone course. The program is being expanded from 36 credits to 39 credits. Additionally, the health services administration specialization will increase from 9 credits to 12 credits. In addition, the SVT was advised that although more recently alumni surveys are being completed annually, this was previously not the case. The SVT was informed that it was a faculty based assessment that led to determine if students are achieving the learning the learning outcomes as per the objectives of the courses, i.e., case analysis. It also appears that decisions regarding the assessment to expand the program were largely a faculty exercise, although based on student interviews, it appears that there was some student input to expand the program to 39 credits. Finally, it was the SVT's understanding that the School's

Interim Dean conducts annual evaluations and/or meets with the full time faculty to assess curriculum quality and as part of the faculty annual performance.

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**5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the Program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and (to) public service values. The required competencies will include five domains - the ability:**

- To lead and manage in public governance;
- To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating to how the program has operationally defined each of the universal required competencies and their relationship to the programs mission.

**Standard 5.1 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 5.1 Comments**

As stated in the SSR, each of the universal competencies of the program has been integrated with the MPA program goals and established learning objectives. Learning objectives of the program are assigned courses for implementation, and assignments are derived to assess student achievement in each of the learning objectives. Outcomes can then be established to inform the program with regard to program goals and universal competencies. Samples (in binders) were provided as one of the bases for assessing students' meeting of the competencies/learning outcomes and as evidence that this information is one of many used for programmatic development of content and curricula.

**5.2 Mission-specific Required Competencies: The program will identify core competencies in other domains that are necessary and appropriate to implement its mission.**

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating to how the program has operationally defined each of their mission-specific required competencies and their relationship to the programs mission (if applicable).

**Standard 5.2 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 5.2 Comments**

The capstone portion of the program (PA 650, Integrative Experience) is a central feature of the program assessment

approach at USF. Prior to the visit, it was difficult for the both COPRA and the SVT to determine whether the information in the SSR was based on systematically derived evidence. The SVT was presented with a rather significant report (evidently an Appendix to the SSR) that provided in depth material to help make sense of both the approach the program is taking toward assessment as well as summarized findings and information that support mission assessment in the MPA program. In addition, a specific report was provided to the SVT regarding the MPA 650 course that received a multiple-semester, multiple professor criteria based assessment of student achievement. This important report led to some revisions of the MPA 650 course to improve student learning and program achievement of intended mission outcomes.

It is important to note that the Program reported that it uploaded the above-mentioned report as a PDF file as an appendix along with its August 2011 SSR on the CiviCore site. The SVT could not access this file before the visit and it still cannot be located by the SVT.

**5.3 Mission-specific Elective Competencies: The program will define its objectives and competencies for optional concentrations and specializations.**

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating how the program has operationally defined each of their mission-specific elective competencies and their relationship to the programs mission (if applicable).

**Standard 5.3 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 5.3 Comments**

In the SSR, mission-specific competencies were not fully identified as learning outcomes/objectives. With the aid of the Appendices section (Table 1, p.127-129) provided to the SVT, it is evident that mission-specific assessment is taking place and reported.

**5.4 Professional Competency: The Program will ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.**

**Standard 5.4 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 5.4 Comments**

Professional Competencies were not examined nor discussed beyond what was listed in the SSR.

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The Site Visit Team should review in the programs SSR where the program indicated it thought it was in the stages of assessment for each competency. The Site Visit Team for this Standard should indicate after its review of the programs assessment practices where the SVT thinks the program is in the stages of assessment. Where the SVT differs from the program self analysis the team should provide information in the

text box below on why they think the program is either further along or not as far as the program itself indicated.

Competency	Learning outcome has been defined	Evidence of learning has been gathered	Evidence of learning has been analyzed	Any Evidence used to make programmatic decisions	List what required courses cover this competency
<b>1. To lead and manage in public governance</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>6. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



**7. Mission****Specific Required Competency if applicable**

No

No

No

No

No

**8. Mission****Specific Required Competency if applicable**

No

No

No

No

No

**9. Mission****Specific Required Competency if applicable**

No

No

No

No

No

**Standard 5.1-3 PART B: Stage of Assessment Comments**

See earlier comments.

 Hide**The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle of the one universal required competency the program chose to highlight.**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle of the one mission-specific required competency the program chose to highlight (if applicable).**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle of the one mission-specific elective competency the program chose to highlight (if applicable).**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**To lead and manage in public governance**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**To participate in and contribute to the public policy process**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**To articulate and apply a public service perspective**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry**

See earlier comments. See also recommendations.

**Standard 2. Matching Governance with the Mission**

**2.1 Administrative Capacity: The program will have an administrative infrastructure appropriate for its mission, goals, and objectives in all delivery modalities employed.**

**Standard 2.1 Status**

Cited by COPRA  
Have Concerns

**Standard 2.1 Comments**

The Commission seeks further elaboration of how substantial self-determining influence is assured under the new structure for the current and online MPA programs. Are the program's curricular, administrative and student affairs governed by the nucleus faculty? How are these provisions assured in the new school structure and in the creation and delivery of the online program? How will the delivery of the online program impact the percentage of Full Time faculty teaching in the program? In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as listed in the COPRA Interim Report offered review of faculty resources devoted to the MPA program and the approach taken in regard to the emergent on-line option for students interested in the MPA program.

The SVT found that since 2008 the program was delivered at five separate locations - and that there are cohort groups of students taking classes at each of these locations. During the SSY, the program was offered at three locations. The program reports that each of the regional sites includes 5-10 classrooms, a computer lab, library, breakout room, kitchen facilities, and offices for faculty use and meetings with students. The program also states that the facilities are available for student use throughout the day, although classes are held during evenings and weekends. The facilities are intended to be close to major transportation modes and convenient for students.

While the SVT was not aware of the extensive use of regional campuses since 2008 prior to the site visit, the program offered clarification regarding the use of regional campuses. However, the only facility that was visited by the SVT was the main campus in San Francisco. A planned discussion with students from the San Jose cohort via Skype was cancelled because no students were able to attend. All of the students and alumni that the SVT spoke with were from the San Francisco cohort. After the site visit, the Program offered to send SVT members to regional campus locations.

The program is periodically geographically distributed throughout the region. While the program administrators and faculty insist that there is parity in services offered throughout the different locations, the SVT was not able to confirm this information. An initial SVT examination of faculty distribution on each of the five MPA locations of the USF program found that in several locations the full-time faculty (FTF) devoted to these locations seemingly fell below the 50% standard set by NASPAA. Program leadership response to the SVT on this matter was that there was some data error in the information provided, and that some off-campus cohorts came to the main campus for classes. Further assessment of data given to the SVT during and after the SVT departed from USF clarified that the USF MPA program met the 50% standard at each of the three locations (with percentages of 60%, 83% and 53%). On departing the campus, the SVT was concerned about how the MPA program is meeting the needs of all students in all locations. The offices for program support personnel, including computer support; audiovisual support, career placement, alumni services, financial aid, and advisement are all located on the main San Francisco campus. A follow up response to the initial SVT report indicated approaches the program and university were taking (and will take) to ensure program quality parity in all regions.

In addition, there are plans to move the entire School of Management to a new downtown location on Howard Street - away from the main campus. This change will also require a comprehensive review of how student services are distributed and, as much as possible, to replicate the experience of the on-ground MPA program.

The University is making a significant investment to pilot the on-line delivery of the MPA program. There has been significant support expressed by the faculty. The Program is attempting to retain the unique "cohort" component of the program, and the faculty intend to share in the teaching and preparation requirements. They are working hard to insure that on-line learning is not divorced from the regional campus model, and that the quality of the program is retained.

Based on discussions with the MPA faculty, Associate Dean and the University On-Line Education Director and Associate Director, it is clear that the faculty are directly involved in the content development of the on-line version of the MPA program that is to be launched.

The SVT was impressed with the thoughtful approach by the Interim Dean to the slow, deliberate and phased in approach to the on-line MPA program to ensure that, despite the success of the University's nursing program in using this fully online medium, the School is careful in ensuring that the online experience will replicate that of the on ground experience as much as possible. In light of especially higher education public institution's rush to capitalize on this medium but without little forethought, if any, on how doing so will impact the quality, content and delivery of the program, it is comforting to find that USF is responsive in how using this medium will affect how its branding, vision, mission and values will be perceived. According to one faculty member who is an expert in the use of social media and the online medium to teach as well as the fact that this area is the subject matter of his research, even he has a tentative attitude as do the rest of the program's faculty about an online delivery of the program. From discussions with the SVT, the School's approach to the on-line MPA is generally supportive yet skeptical using a wait and see approach.

**2.2 Faculty Governance: An adequate faculty nucleus - at least five (5) full-time faculty members or their equivalent - will exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program.**

**Standard 2.2 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 2.2 Comments**

SVT confirmed program reporting in SSR.

**Standard 3 Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance**

**3.1 Faculty Qualifications: The program's faculty members will be academically or professionally qualified to pursue the program's mission.**

**Standard 3.1 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 3.1 Comments**

The SVT reviewed the USF MPA program faculty nucleus, full time, and adjunct faculty resumes and folders and found the faculty qualifications to be reflective of what was presented in the SSR. See recommendation 7.

**3.2 Faculty Diversity: The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and retention of faculty members.**

**Standard 3.2 Status**

Have Concerns

**Standard 3.2 Comments**

Based on interviews of a small sample of students at varying stages of study in the MPA program, two of the four students advised that diversity is an area in need of attention. Specifically, as one student put it, it would be good to have more diversity reflected in both the program's faculty and staff.

There are several approaches that are being undertaken by the USF MPA program and by the School of Management in regard to diversifying the faculty. In regard to the program, the SVT was provided a program-specific diversity plan. Interviews with faculty indicated that the plan was only recently developed as action plan, and that there is room for improvement. The SSR report indicates a July 2011 plan was discussed among faculty.

In regard to the School, the SVT learned from the Associate Dean, that targeted recruiting of underrepresented minority (URM) (Native American, African American and Hispanics) groups is conducted, as indicated by recent hires. Professional conferences are also used as another medium to recruit prospective faculty. But, despite the presence of a Committee on the Status of Women, a Diversity Officer who's at the executive level and a woman as well as a Provost (who is a female) at the University level, it appears that outside of the above, there are no identified and strategic recruitment efforts in place, at least at the program level, to routinely recruit URM groups.

**3.3 Research, Scholarship, and Service: Program faculty members will produce scholarship and engage in professional and community service activities outside of the university appropriate to the program's mission, stage of their careers, and the expectations of their university.**

**Standard 3.3 Status**

Cited by COPRA

**Standard 3.3 Comments**

The Commission seeks further information about how research and service experience are linked to the mission. In particular how does the program define, measure and assure "complementary research" and "transforming learning into acts of consequence to serve our communities, especially the most vulnerable among us" with respect to the standards for faculty performance.

In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as listed in the COPRA Interim Report offered outlines a list of publications and professional activities that address evidence that faculty are pursuing mission-related contributions in terms of scholarship and practices in public affairs and administration. The SVT was provided with faculty folders listed professional accomplishments to validate reports in both the program SSR and the response to the interim report.

When asked how the MPA program help faculty to pursue complementary research and service as per the information in the SSR, the SVT was informed that there were really no mechanisms in place to do so. However, given this void, the Associate Dean did suggest that perhaps the School and thus the MPA program could develop a formal policy for complementary research that relates to the program, School and University's mission.

**Standard 4 Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students**

**4.1 Student Recruitment: The program will have student recruitment practices appropriate for its mission.**

**Standard 4.1 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 4.1 Comments**

The SVT found student recruitment to be as described in the SSR.

**4.2 Student Admissions: The Program will have and apply well-defined admission criteria appropriate for its mission.**

**Standard 4.2 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 4.2 Comments**

The SVT found that some minor clarifications to the information described in the SSR for student admissions. The program representatives explained that the SSR admissions criterion of a minimum 2.8 GPA is incorrect. Actually, the standard used is a minimum 2.7 GPA and a 3.0 in the last 60 units of undergraduate work. In addition, the Program Director has the ability to waive

this requirement at his/her discretion if there were compelling reasons (such as a lengthy record as a successful practitioner.) As stated in the SSR, "a candidate's letter of intent, professional experience, resume, letters of recommendation, and potential interview weigh more heavily on admittance than test scores or undergraduate GPA." There are no conditional enrollments.

Generally, the USF MPA program is designed as a cohort model where most students are enrolled in two (2) courses per semester or 6 credits (3 credits per course) with currently ~ 7 weeks dedicated to each course although there are immediate plans to add an additional week to each course. In other words, each course would consist of 8 weeks during each 16-week semester.

The interview is used as another mechanism for determining whether or not students are academically prepared for success in the program. As well, according to the Associate Dean, during recruitment, prospective students are advised of the need for commitment to the program to ensure success.

**4.3 Support for Students: The program will ensure the availability of support services, such as curriculum advising, internship placement and supervision, career counseling, and job placement assistance to enable students to succeed or advance in careers in public affairs, administration, and policy.**

#### **Standard 4.3 Status**

Cited by COPRA

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#### **Standard 4.3 Comments**

The Self-Study Report indicates that over half of the program's graduate placements were unknown. Also, there is the statement in 6.1C on budget that alumni relations/services were adequate to maintain mission but not for improvement. The Commission requests the program provide further information on how it tracks students to job placement and how the program assesses its mission without this important outcome information.

In the January 31, 2012 program response to this concern as listed in the COPRA Interim Report listed a clearer record of graduate placements. Given the need to improve its understanding of program placements and student tracking, the report indicates initiatives by the School of Management that will enhance program capacity in this area.

The SVT reviewed the information related to the "second round of calls" to the program's graduates reference in the Program Response to the Interim Report. We can confirm that the additional calls were made and the additional information was generated.

We also concur with the program's statement that, "The program has room for growth in tracking students to job placement and how the program assesses its mission success." The program is experiencing significant growth and making significant changes/improvements. However, the linkage between these changes and the information generated in program assessment is sometimes weak.

The SVT found that the Interim Dean has in fact placed a greater emphasis on support for students. The School of Management either has hired, or is in the process of hiring the following positions:

• Director of Assessment and Learning

• Director of Career Development

• Assistant Career Development for Regional Campuses

• Director of E-Learning

• Director of Alumni Relations

• Director of Marketing

These resources will obviously be spread over the entire School, but are expected to assist the MPA program with implementing the support envisioned in Standard 4.3

The recent attempt at involvement of the alumni in the program will provide an opportunity to strengthen the ability to track former students and strengthen ties with the program. The first meeting of the new MPA Advisory Group was held on Feb. 15, 2012 and included just six former students. There are plans to have quarterly meetings.

The SVT found career counseling to be as generally described in the SSR. The alumni and current students that we spoke with had made minimal use of the School's career services. The new Director of Career Development has plans to dramatically improve career development programs. She is in the process of hiring someone to focus on managing career development activities at the regional campuses.

#### **4.4 Student Diversity: The Program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and admissions practices and student support services.**

##### **Standard 4.4 Status**

Have Concerns

##### **Standard 4.4 Comments**

The SVT found that the Program has recently developed a diversity plan. Several different individuals worked on the plan during the past year. There is still a need, however for the Program to reach out to all stakeholders (including faculty, staff, and students) to prepare a thoughtful plan. The diversity results achieved to date are impressive. There is every expectation that there will be a significant opportunities for faculty hiring and promotion in the future, as 15 of the 34 full professors in the School are over 65 years of age with fewer positions at the Associate Professor rank, and the program needs a robust plan to insure that its faculty reflect the rich diversity of the student body and the community.

#### **Standard 6. Matching Resources with the Mission**

**6.1 Resource Adequacy: The program will have sufficient funds, physical facilities, and resources in addition to its faculty to pursue its mission, objectives, and continuous development.**

**Standard 6.1 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 6.1 Comments**

The SVT found resources to be adequate as described in the SSR.

 Hide**Standard 7. Matching Communications with the Mission**

**7.1 Communications: The program will provide appropriate and current information about its mission, policies, practices, and accomplishments - including student learning outcomes - sufficient to inform decisions by its stakeholders such as prospective and current students; faculty; employers of current students and graduates; university administrators; alumni; and accrediting agencies.**

**Standard 7.1 Status**

Have No Concerns

**Standard 7.1 Comments**

The SVT found Communications to be adequate as described in the SSR.

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In this section, the site visit team may commend the program on outstanding efforts and accomplishments and may recommend actions to strengthen the program. First, within the framework of peer review and accreditation (and without compromising the judgment to be made by COPRA), it is appropriate for the SVT to identify items that are well done or that are innovative in the field. This recognition of attainments and successes can add to the items covered in the review of standards.

Second, the site visit team may develop recommendations or suggestions which it believes will strengthen the program. These recommendations should flow from the mission of the program (and should avoid personal views of how things should be done).

**Commendations**

The SVT found a number of commendations for the USF MPA program. First, the program has initiated and developed an admirable mission that is interwoven with the history of the university and is highlighted by the commitment of the university's leadership. Both faculty and students of the program uphold the USF MPA program mission by embracing a very challenging commitment. It is also clear to the SVT that the values are clearly associated with this mission. Second, the faculty of the USF MPA program brings a rare mix of mature faculty with an extremely talented emergent faculty. This mix allows students to have access to a program faculty with a very strong record of administrative and scholarly achievement that



ranges from public affairs to non-profit administration as well as a talented emergent faculty that are well trained in contemporary methodologies and approaches. Third, while the SVT did not interview a large number of students, the team was very impressed with the students that were interviewed. These students and alumni represent the program well and represent the values and mission of the program. Combined, the mission, faculty and students are supported by a very strong administrative staff. This combination is strengthened by a positive attitude and motivation of excellence that is evident. Given the impressive and rigorous vision of the Interim Dean, including the steps taken to this point to improve the school and program, the USF MPA program has a tremendous upside for the future.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Systematic Use of Data to Inform the Program**--While it is clear that there are a number of efforts in place to assist the program and that are on-going, it seems evident that while the program has lots of data and a considerable amount of assessment, most of the information is used informally. Improvement in assessment clarity, while difficult, will assist the program. Specifically, the SVT was challenged to see how program goals, program competencies and program learning outcomes were usefully integrated to inform the program. While the program is faced with numerous assessment requirements, clarity in terms of mission achievement is recommended.
2. **Monitor Resources for the MPA Program as it expands**--The USF MPA program has an ambitious outreach with the main campus, four external campuses beyond the main campus offerings and a newly forming on-line option. Faculty and program are stretched and care should be given to meeting the standards of serving students fully in each of these domains by complying with faculty and mission assessment standards. The SVT recommends that the program review the distribution of services in light of their highly decentralized model for teaching. In addition, the SVT would also recommend that the program focus some of their planning efforts for the proposed on-line cohort to include a review of student support services. The SVT recommends that the program's annual update to COPRA describe the location, enrollment, and distribution of faculty resources to each of the regional campuses. The SVT recommends that the program's annual update to COPRA describe the status of these efforts.
3. **Leverage the New Advisory Board**--the new board was formed within the past few months and can be an important resource of the program and its future development.
4. **Solidify Leadership of the MPA program**--the rather rapid changes in program leadership in the past two years is not reflective of its historical leadership commitment. Solidifying leadership for an extended period with a committed leader will serve the program and its students well.
5. **Enhance the MPA Diversity Plan**--The SVT recommends that the development of a Diversity Plan be an engaged as a systematic and thoughtful effort on the part of the School's leadership across all programs. While program chairs can head the task, for example, its success must be a product of input from all of the MPA program's stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff. Additionally, and as the research has borne out, the success or failure of any Diversity Plan cannot be the

sole responsibility of anyone person. The responsibility and ownership must be shared by and at all levels of especially the administration. Most important, a Diversity Plan must be the primary responsibility of leadership and be accompanied by performance indicators at all levels of leadership to ensure that its definition and how it is to be achieved has synchronicity at all levels.

6. Connect Career Development to the Program Mission-Given the newly allocated resources devoted to career development for students, the program should integrate this resource and efforts to match the program mission.

7. Enhance Complementary Research-The program should consider a program level policy to incentivize faculty to conduct research in certain areas and seek systematic ways for formal recognition of faculty who pursue such research in the form of a letter in the faculty members' file, as one example. This would become an important exercise especially those on tenure track who will need this evidence of research in the bid for tenure and promotion.