

**University of San Francisco  
Master of Public Administration Program**

**Response to April 3, 2012, NASPAA Site Visit Report**

We thank the Site Visit Team for its careful assessment of the MPA program at the University of San Francisco. We offer in response to your draft report the following information for your consideration for possible revisions. As there is no pagination in the online report, comments are organized by the Standard under which you will find your reported language.

Standard 1.1

We acknowledge an inconsistency between our Self Study Report response at 1.1.4 “The nucleus faculty considered the ideas and suggested language from the May 15th meeting, along with additional feedback from students, alumni, and employers, resulting in a revised statement” and our frequency selection in 1.1.6 for the Stakeholders category of Employers of “never” having been “involved in the processes used to review and/or develop the current mission statement.” It would have been more accurate for us to answer in 1.1.6 that employers have been involved, “advisory in early and latter stages of mission review and development” at a frequency of “other, as needed” similar to the “Other, Community Partners” stakeholder group. We recognize the value in more systematically reaching out to the employer community, and are doing so through our newly formed Advisory Board.

Standard 1.3

*“However, the advisory board, which also includes students...”*

The MPA Advisory Board includes alumni but does not include students.

Standard 5.2

*“...it was difficult for 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 August 2011, we submitted our 222-page Self Study Report, approximately half of which consists of appendices. The body of the report includes more than 30

references to the appendices. We believed that COPRA and the SVT had our complete report. On the day we submitted our Self Study (8/15/11), we saved both an electronic and hard-copy of the document, both of which contained all appendices. The complete Self Study, including all appendices, was also available to the SVT on the first day of the site visit. We greatly regret the unintentional and unrecognized absence of the supporting material contained in the appendices.

Standard 5.1-3 PART B: Stage of Assessment

The Site Visit Report suggested we do not use our evidence of learning to make programmatic decisions regarding Universal Competencies, as follows:

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Learning outcome defined</b>	<b>Evidence of learning gathered</b>	<b>Evidence of learning analyzed</b>	<b>Evidence used for programmatic decisions</b>	<b>Required courses cover competency</b>
<b>1. To lead and manage in public governance</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>6. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>7. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable</b>	No	No	No	No	No
<b>8. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable</b>	No	No	No	No	No
<b>9. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable</b>	No	No	No	No	No

Yet, we discuss the use of evidence of learning throughout the Self Study Report proper, and further document this in our Logic Model (Table 1) and Attachment B, (first referenced in the Self Study at section 1.3.4a: “On-going assessment activities have generated numerous changes in course syllabi, as described in the Logic Model and in Attachment B in greater detail.”) We have systematically mapped out how we close the loop on learning and apply evidence to changes at the course and program levels for all five Universal Competencies for assessment purposes and to improve programmatic learning outcomes. Earlier in the Site Visit Report you seem to acknowledge this in your Standard 5.1 comments which state: “*Sample (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.”*

Our Self Study Report includes the following table in Section 5.3 Part B:

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*
1. To lead and manage in public governance	Yes (see below and logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, comprehensive case study analysis data, pre-course survey, Alumni Survey	Yes, analysis of faculty feedback on theory and leadership, pre-course survey (See logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, changes made in syllabi (see logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	MPA 611, 613, 620, 636, 638, 633, 644, 650
2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process	Yes, (see below and logic model Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, comprehensive case study analysis data, pre-capstone course survey.	Yes, analysis of faculty feedback on environmental scanning and stakeholder analysis (see details below)	Yes, sections on advocacy groups added to capstone course. (see logic model, Appendices, Table: 1))	MPA 611,617, 632, 623, 633, 670, 680, 650
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	Yes, (see below and logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, comprehensive case study analysis data, pre-course survey, Alumni Survey	Yes, analysis of faculty feedback on the quality of students’ case analysis (see details below and the logic model, Appendices, Table: 1))	Pre-course analysis, -- added program evaluation course	MPA 613, 617, 620, 623, 632, 633, 644, 660, 670, 680, 650.
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective	Yes, (see below and logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, comprehensive case study analysis data, Alumni Survey	Yes, analysis of faculty feedback on the quality of students’ case analysis; categories “recommendations and stakeholder analysis”	Yes, -- revision of syllabi, (see logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	MPA 611, 632, 644, 623, 680, 650
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.	Yes, (see below and logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	Yes, capstone faculty feedback and capstone course presentations and case analysis in HR class	Yes, analysis of student presentations in the capstone course. Also faculty feedback on the written case analysis, as well as case analysis of the HR course. (see details below)	Yes, (see logic model, Appendices, Table: 1)	MPA 613, 620, 636, 638, 633, 644, 650, 680

In light of this evidence, the Site Visit Report comment noted above and its stated recognition of other programmatic improvements (e.g., increasing the number of sessions per course; lengthening the program from 36 to 39 units) we suggest that for Competencies 1-5, the current value of “No” under the column “Any evidence used to make programmatic decisions” be changed to “Yes.”

### Standard 2.1 Administrative Capacity

*“The SVT found that the program is now regularly provided at five separate locations - and that there are cohort groups of students taking classes at each of these locations.”*

The program is not regularly provided at five separate locations, nor are cohort groups of students taking classes at each of these locations. During the Self Study Year, the MPA program had cohort groups of students taking classes at three locations: San Francisco main campus, Sacramento satellite campus, and South Bay satellite campus.

*“The SVT was not aware of the extensive use of regional campuses prior to the site visit. Therefore, the only facility that was visited 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.”*

As stated at the start of the Self Study Report on Program Fact Sheet, the MPA degree program, established in 1978, has been taught for many years at “Both Main Campus and Satellite Campuses.” Further, we answer “Yes” to the question “Does the program offer courses at remote sites and locations” and indicate that “The entire program can be completed at this site” listing our Sacramento and South Bay (formerly Cupertino, now San Jose) regional campuses. We offer the MPA every year on the main campus and in Sacramento, but not at all campuses all years. The use of satellite campuses and students is referenced repeatedly in the Self Study Report in Section 5.3 Part B (additional information about the cases) and the appendices as well.

*“The SVT examined faculty distribution on each of the five MPA locations of the USF program and found that in several locations the full-time faculty (FTF) devoted to these locations fall below the 50% standard set by NASPAA. While the entire program is in conformance in regard to this standard, the program seems to not meet the standard in several locations. Program leadership responses to the SVT on this matter was that there might be some data error in the information provided, or that some off-campus cohorts came to the main campus for classes.”*

Table 3.1.4 in the Self Study Report indicated we had 58% full-time faculty coverage in the Self Study Year. During the Site Visit, we were asked to provide data underlying Table 3.1.4 in the Self Study Report regarding the ratio of full-time to

part-time faculty. We provided the Site Visit Team a detailed faculty schedule listing that covered the period from Fall 2008 through Spring 2012. This listing showed the program being taught variously but not simultaneously in San Francisco, Sacramento, South Bay, North Bay, and San Ramon over the past five years (main campus and four satellite campuses). However, we have not offered the MPA at North Bay the last two years; the most recent North Bay cohort completed in Summer of 2009, more than a year before the beginning of the Self Study Year. Again, we do not offer the MPA every year in every region, and during the Self Study Year, the MPA was offered on the main campus and only in Sacramento and South Bay campuses.

Further, the table we provided at short notice to the Site Visit Team erroneously reported fulltime professors Horiuchi and Connor as "part-time." We have reviewed our faculty scheduling data extract and have found no other errors. This error resulted in 31 sections over the multi-year period appearing to be taught by part-time rather than fulltime faculty. With this correction in place to the table provided to the Site Visit Team, we have recalculated faculty ratios overall and by regions and have the following results for the Self Study Year (the detailed spreadsheet from which the following summary data is derived is a separate file, attached):

54 discrete courses/sections (CRNs) offered in the Self Study year, with 38 taught by full-time faculty or 70% overall across all regions.

Sacramento: 15 course/sections, with 9 taught by full-time faculty or 60%

San Francisco: 22 course/sections, with 19 taught by full-time faculty or 86%

South Bay: 17 course/sections, with 9 taught by full-time faculty or 53%

Program quality parity in all regions is a paramount concern for us. Beyond meeting the NASPAA faculty ratio requirements, regional campuses have onsite librarians, computers with all course-required software, classroom technologies, and other amenities. We also use further means to assure the learning experiences are equivalent. Regional students attend one fall semester in San Francisco in a "super-cohort" model. This provides the program an opportunity to directly compare the quality and preparation of students across regions. Similarly, PA 650 final cases are read across regions as an important element of this evaluation and discussion includes consideration of any indication of differential learning by region. This regional comparison of PA 650 results is evidenced in the Self Study Report and the Appendices.

Further, we added to our fulltime faculty during the Self Study Year and have a faculty search active at present. We have plans in place to increase our fulltime faculty as part of the Online MPA launch as coverage needs occur. The university, the School of Management and the MPA program commit to apply our faculty and staff assets so as to be in full compliance with NASPAA standards on the main campus, in the regions and online.

### Standard 3.2, Faculty Diversity

The Site Visit Report states this is “*an area in need of attention*” and that the program’s diversity plan “*...was only recently developed, not fully vetted within the faculty, and that there is room for improvement.*” While the diversity plan was only recently approved by faculty as an action plan and a working document to be revisited and amended, it was extensively and fully vetted by the faculty.

Further, as stated in the Self Study Report, section 4.4.1, the MPA faculty have discussed our diversity aspirations, circulated an early plan in July 2011, read Mitchell Rice’s text last summer as a lead-in to a lengthy discussion in one of the first faculty meetings of the year. These are documented in the faculty meeting notes made available to the Site Visit Team during the Site Visit. We agree on “room for improvement” and stated so in the Self Study Report; we agree with the Site Visit Team’s Recommendation that it would be useful to augment our Diversity Plan with a section specifically addressing faculty diversity. We would like the Site Visit Report to recognize also that recent hires brought additional diversity to the faculty.

Thank you for the opportunity to review your draft Site Visit Report and suggest a few revisions where we feel the draft could more fully and accurately represent the program as we had presented it through our Self Study Report, our response to COPRA’s Interim Report, and the observations of the Site Visit Team. We are deeply grateful for your efforts to fairly and completely review our program and write your Site Visit Report for COPRA’s consideration. Thank you as well for your Commendations and Recommendations, which we will be using to further advance our mission and vision of public service.