UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | College of Arts and Sciences

ASSESSMENT REPORT REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

Master of Arts in Urban and Public Affairs

ACADEMIC YEAR 2019 - 2020

I. LOGISTICS

1. **Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).**

   Sarah Burgess, sburgess@usfca.edu
   Faculty Director, UPA

2. **Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major and Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program.**
   Please also indicate which report format are you submitting –Standard Report or Reflections Document

   This report is submitted for the Graduate Program in Urban and Public Affairs. We are submitting a reflections document, rather than a standard report.

3. **Have there been any revisions to the Curricular Map in 2019-2020 academic year? If there has been a change, please submit the new/revised Curricular Map document.**

   Yes. UPA did a full curriculum change last year. The new/revised Curriculum Map is attached below.

1. **Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting <u>an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program</u>**

   No changes were made.

   ## Mission Statement (Graduate):

   The Master of Arts in Urban & Public Affairs prepares students for employment in various policy-related fields by educating them in fundamental concepts of public policy, urban history and planning, community organizing and advocacy, and community-engaged research, while developing a policy specialization through an independent capstone project. The program serves the broader Bay Area community by engaging students with community in multiple ways, in service of the common good.

2. **Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting <u>an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.</u>**

   Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, gamson@usfca.edu). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

   ## PLOs (Major/Graduate/Certificate): There have been no changes.

   At the end of the program, students will be able to:

   1. Demonstrate a theoretical, practical, and ethical understanding of community change, through practices including public policy advocacy, campaigns, and/or political/community organizing;

   2. Critically analyze problems in urban and regional policy and politics using a variety of research methods;

   3. Demonstrate the capacity for effective oral and written communication;

   4. Evaluate and develop urban and regional policy, while learning to situate models of social change within historical and regional contexts;

   5. Contribute to informed public discourse around contemporary political and urban policy issues through addressing issues in public policy, advocacy, community organizing, politics, and public service.

III. REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

1. **What elements of the program were adaptable to a remote/distance learning environment?**

There were several elements of the program that were adaptable:

- Content of the program. We were able to move the discussions about the various theoretical readings on to Zoom quite successfully. We were able to deliver the content of both our required and elective courses.
- Internships. All of our students were eventually placed in online internships. It took longer than usual, but all of the current second year cohort were able to conduct their internships in meaningful, policy-making positions.
- Some forms of community engagement. During the transition online in Spring, professors found ways to do some forms of community engagement through online resources. Some reported that they had used guest speakers as a way to bridge the gap between online education and the community. The Community-Engaged Research Methods class had the biggest hurdle (and perhaps the biggest success). That class was working with LAFCo when we transitioned to online education. The students continued their work on the project for LAFCo and even presented it to Supervisors at City Hall via Zoom.

2. **What elements of the program were not adaptable to a remote/distance learning environment?**

- Community Engagement. This has been the most disappointing loss for students. The week that San Francisco shut down and the university closed, UPA students were supposed to go to Detroit to explore how the city is structured and how advocates are putting social justice principles in action by challenging city officials to plan with an eye towards racial and class justice. This key trip—one that students had planned for by engaging readings on urban planning in Detroit specifically—had to be cancelled at the last minute.
  Students also lost the chance to engage community partners in some courses. There were city walks, community partner work days, service days—all meant to connect students to the organizations and city life students are studying—that had to be cancelled as well. It was difficult, if not impossible, to replicate this form of engagement over Zoom.

- Completion of Capstone Projects. Some Students who were in the middle of writing their Capstone Project were unable to carry out their research plan. Data collection and analysis were happening at the time of the pivot. A large number of students found that, for a variety of reasons, planned interviews fell through. Others who had planned to engage in participant observation research had to re-design their Capstone—their research question, their methods section, and their data—in order to be able to complete the project. The result was that we still have six students who have not completed their Capstone Projects from last Spring.

- Capstone Project Presentations. At the end of each year, we invite the communities with which the students worked to attend their Capstone Project Presentation. Given the numbers of people and the need to reduce distractions for the speakers, we were unable to invite community members to the Zoom presentations.

- Colloquium & Building the Culture of the Program. The UPA Colloquium has two primary purposes: (1) Bring the students together to engage with leading scholars as they give talks; (2) build the culture of the program. Without sharing common space (and due to the fact that public talks were mostly cancelled after the pivot), the UPA Colloquium had to be re-designed. Select students were asked to present each week on a topic relevant to urban and public affairs, instead of the original planned presentations. Students struggled in these moments to find the connection that these in-person sessions used to provide.

- Internships. While we are quite proud of the fact that students were all placed in internships, we cannot deny that the types of work they did in these internships were not what would have typically happened. Students did more data entry and administrative work than they would have done in the past. Some of them reported less frequent meetings with supervisors and less feedback on their work.

3. **What was the average proportion of synchronous versus asynchronous learning for your program or parts thereof? A rough estimate would suffice.**

In the transition to remote learning, roughly 80% of the course material was taught synchronously, and 20% taught asynchronously.

4. **For what aspects of learning is synchronous instruction effective and for which ones is asynchronous instruction more effective?**

<u>Synchronous Instruction: We have found that the following aspects of learning are best met with synchronous instruction:</u>
- Class discussions of course readings and materials. We have found that discussion about course materials is most engaging when we do it remotely.
- Working with community partners. This work is best when there can be discussion and interaction.
- Oral Presentations. Students in our program work better with immediate feedback and so we have chosen to do all oral presentations synchronously.
- Guest Speakers. It has been critical for our students to engage with guest speakers, commenting on presentations and asking questions.
- Office hours. As a way to maintain the one-on-one connection with our students, our professors continue to make themselves available to students for consultation.

<u>Asynchronous Instruction</u>
- Video lectures explaining particular assignments. In our attempts to flip the classroom, we have put things like explanations of upcoming assignments and general class feedback about completed assignments on video lectures.
- Feedback on written and oral work. Many of our professors have used Canvas tools such as voice recordings to provide in depth feedback on students work.
- Peer review of written work. In some classes, students have been asked to engage others' work through practices of peer review. Following detailed worksheets, they are, on their own time, asked to engage the work of their peers and provide commentary and suggestions.
- Discussion Boards. Discussion boards have helped students to further discuss and apply the concepts they have discussed in class.
- Taking quizzes or tests about materials.

5. **As remote/distance learning continues in the current environment, what changes has the program instituted based on experiences with remote instruction?**

- We have incorporated many, many more guest speakers into the program to make up for the lack of community engagement.
- We have done a great amount of outreach to internship supervisors in order to secure internships that have a remote component that is much better defined and in line with the requirement that our internships.
- Faculty have met throughout the semester to discuss what is working and techniques for addressing what could be improved.
- We have found several community partners, including LAFCo, who are willing to create community-engaged work online.
- Faculty were trained this summer and had more time to construct classes with an eye toward building a course for the remote environment. This has included:
  - Flipping the Classroom to focus on discussion.
  - The use of breakout rooms to promote discussion.
  - The use of activities to generate ideas for discussion.
  - Clearly separating activities to promote engagement.
  - Scaffolding assignments so that smaller assignments lead to larger ones.

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

(Any relevant tables, charts and figures, if the program so chooses, could be included here)

Master of Arts in Urban & Public Affairs// Curricular Map (Rev. Nov. 2020). Program Learning Outcomes X Courses/ Requirements	PLO1: Demonstrate a theoretical, practical, and ethical understanding of community change, through practices including public policy advocacy, campaigns, and/ or political/ community organizing.	PLO2: Critically analyze problems in urban and regional policy and politics using a variety of research methods.	PLO3: Demonstrate the capacity for effective oral and written communication.	PLO4: Evaluate and develop urban and regional policy, while learning to situate models of social change within historical and regional contexts.	PLO5: Contribute to informed public discourse around contemporary political and urban policy issues through addressing issues in public policy, advocacy, community organizing, politics, and public service.
Requirements					
UPA 630 Urban Power Seminar	I	I	I	I	I
UPA 633 UPA Colloquium	I		I	I	I
UPA 634 UPA Colloquium II	D		D	D	D
UPA 650: Community-Engaged Public Policy Research		I	D	D	I
UPA Internship (no course number)	D	D	D	D	D
UPA 651: Rhetoric for the Common Good	D		D/M		
UPA 652: Masters Capstone Project	M	M	M	M	M
Practical Politics Workshops (no course number)	D			D	D
Electives					
UPA 660: The Politics of Public Policy	D			D	
UPA 661: Urban & Regional Planning	D	D		D	
UPA 662: Urban Public Finance				D	D
UPA 663: Globalization, Social Justice & the City	D		D		
UPA 664: Cities, Law & Inequality		D		D	
UPA 665: Urban Racial Politics		D		D	
UPA 666: Applied Democratic Theory	D		D		
UPA 667: Housing, Community & Public Policy	D				D
668: The Economics of Social Justice	D				D
669: Urban Field Class		D	D		D
UPA 670...: Policy Theme Seminars					
UPA 671 Education Reform	D			D	
UPA 672 The Immigrant City	D	D			D
UPA 673 Urban Food Policy		D		D	
UPA 674 Non-Profits and Public Policy	D				D
UPA 680…: Practical Politics Theme Seminars					
681 Labor & Community Organizing	D		D		D
682 Campaigns & Political Mobilization	D		D		D
683 Grassroots Movement-Building	D		D		D