



ASSESSMENT REPORT REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

MA in Public Leadership Program

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).**

Academic Director Ken Goldstein, kmgoldstein@usfca.edu

Program Director Seth Lynn, slynn@usfca.edu

Program Manager Madeline Meininger, mameininger@usfca.edu

- 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 is a reflections document for the MA in Public Leadership Program.

- 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.**

No changes were made to the curricular map in the 2019-2020 academic year.

II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 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.**

Yes, this is a newly drafted mission statement

Mission Statement (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

The mission of the Master of Arts in Public Leadership program is to provide a rigorous theoretical and practical curriculum on political campaigns, policymaking, and the personal and cultural complexities of public service. The program builds skills in the domains of writing, research, and analysis. We equip students to engage in productive public dialogue and to be ethical, strategic leaders in their community in a variety of contexts, including electoral politics and public service careers.

- 2. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.”**

No

PLOs (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

Students will:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in writing, research, statistics, analysis, and oral presentation suitable for political and policy professionals
- 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
- Apply knowledge gained in the classroom to various political settings in the community
- Understand the nature of political power, mechanisms for aggregating interests, and how to influence the process in an ethical manner
- Interact with politicians as well as professionals from fields including campaigns, advocacy, community organizing, strategic communications, public policy, and public service

III. REMOTE/DISTANCE LEARNING

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

While the majority of the program was already held remotely, we did need to adapt our 1-credit seminars to the remote environment. Since March, we have held four of these courses and have continued to make slight alterations in format to adjust to the remote environment. The first iteration, MPL 624 Survey Research Practicum, was held in mid-March. We made the decision to cancel the in-person session on March 7th, one week before the course was scheduled to begin and in the midst of rapid and significant COVID related restrictions in San Francisco. The class closely mirrored what would have taken place in the classroom and consisted of two long days of seated instruction. This did not translate well to the virtual environment. Our latest iterations of these courses have seen significant transformation. MPL 621 American Democracy Overview, held in August, saw the class time broken up over four days instead of two, limiting the length of any one sitting to four hours. Other Zoom and Canvas tools, such as breakout rooms and Canvas groups, were more fully utilized to provide small group spaces for students to work in an environment that better enables discussion and imitates in-person interaction.

In addition to the course material delivered during these 1-credit courses, we historically relied on the in-person weekends to foster relationships between students to build trust and networks. This, more so than the classes themselves, was the challenge in a solely remote environment. We consciously increased the remote opportunities for students to interact with each other by hosting weekly happy hours via Zoom and encouraged professors to more frequently utilize breakout rooms during classes and to assign group projects that allowed students to work collaboratively. Ultimately, these changes will have a lasting positive impact on the program and will likely outlast the fully remote environment we are currently in.

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

None.

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

Approximately 3 out of 4 of our classes are conducted synchronously while the remaining quarter are asynchronous. Professors who teach asynchronously put much more emphasis on one-on-one meetings and tutoring sessions which allow them to address students' individual projects and needs, while using Canvas discussion boards to foster interaction between students.

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

Modules that lend themselves to discussion or a back and forth between students and a speaker are best held synchronously. These are the moments that best imitate what would happen in a classroom and providing that opportunity to students is important. This was implemented in MPL 605 Civil Military Relations and Public Leadership, a course which frequently hosts guest speakers who are able to join class from across the country and engage in discussions with students.

Asynchronous lectures work very well for more technical lessons. Being able to pause a video or watch it multiple times allows students to absorb material at their own pace and follow along as they work on developing the skill. Students utilized this opportunity in MPL 603 Quantitative Methods in Public Policy where they were able to learn the fundamentals of Tableau and SPSS at their own pace and then consult with the professor and guest lecturers when they had questions.

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

As previously stated, we have increased out-of-class opportunities for students to interact. This fills a gap in the program as well as students expressed need to combat isolation. Our introductory course, MPL 621 American Democracy Overview, was revamped somewhat considerably to foster connections, understanding of shared experience, and intention within the program as an acknowledgment that these things wouldn't have the opportunity to manifest organically the way they would if we were convening in person.