



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2008-2009

Report Date: June 2009

School/College: CPS

Department/Program: Public administration programs (BPA and MPA)

Person completing the Report: Maurice Penner, Professor and Program Director

1. **Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:
 - a. Which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.
 - b. Who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

Stated Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate professional level oral and written communication skills, including ability to communicate and facilitate work processes effectively in person or online
2. Discuss and apply well-regarded techniques to plan, evaluate and manage public programs
3. Demonstrate understanding of, and develop a process to regularly update, knowledge regarding information technologies utilized in the management of public organizations
4. Describe and apply concepts in public sector economics and finance
5. Discuss and apply human resource management functions and skills
6. Develop and apply effective leadership and teamwork skills
7. Analyze public policies; develop and present credible alternatives to status quo



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

8. Develop and apply quantitative research and analytical skills
 9. Develop and analyze budgets; describe how organizational performance is managed via budgetary processes
 10. Describe and discuss U.S. health care systems, legal policy, and managerial issues. Apply theory to practice in an organization
 11. Apply the highest ethical standards for administrative practice.
- a. The MPA Integrative Case Analysis Exam and the year-long Independent Study Project are the primary methods for evaluating at least the following program learning outcomes: demonstrate professional level oral and written communication skills; discuss and apply well-regarded techniques to plan, evaluate, and manage public programs. The Case Analysis exam is evaluated by a three-person blind review team.

In addition, we require students to complete a “Pre-MPA 650—Integrative Seminar survey” to identify “learning gaps” in their previous coursework.

The Public Administration program director and the full-time faculty will conduct a comprehensive assessment of both the survey and the comprehensive case analysis results in Fall 2009. At that time, we plan to develop a survey instrument for faculty (part- and full-time) designed to identify “learning gaps” in the course leading to the culminating Case Analysis Exam and Integrative Seminar. We also will revise the student survey instrument as appropriate.

The Independent Study Project (MPA 698/688) on a select topic under full-time faculty guidance and supervision is a year-long course. The comprehensive project is designed to assess students’ research and analytical skills (outcomes #'s, 1 and 2) in addition to providing them with an opportunity to incorporate their public administration and/or health services administration knowledge. It student’s three-semester research project also provides an opportunity to demonstrate other public administration-related skills and knowledge. A letter grade is issued at the end of the MPA 698/688 course with detailed formative and summative full-time faculty feedback provided.

It is worth noting that the Dean and the public administration faculty are exploring accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). As a long-standing member of NASPAA, we believe accreditation is an important next step. NASPAA requires outcomes-based direct assessment of student learning as a core requirement for accreditation. The MPA program is developing its measures and process to mirror NASPAA guidelines for the assessment of student learning. Although NASPAA does not accredit undergraduate programs, we will adopt similar principles and practices in assessing learning in the BPA program.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- b. The Public Administration program director and associate director and full-time faculty were involved in the assessment: Drs. Maury Penner (Director), Michael O'Neill, Larry Brewster, Catherine Horiuchi, and Gleb Nikitenko (Associate Program Director and instructor). It is important to note that many of our long-standing and highly qualified adjunct faculty have participated in the planning and implementation of assessment via frequent faculty meetings, telephone conferences, email and blackboard communication, and as instructors who design and teach the courses with the goal of achieving identified course and program learning goals. We strongly encourage faculty to communicate with those who teach the courses which precede and follow their own course to better ensure continuity and to preserve the logic inherent in course sequencing.

12. Please Answer the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:

a. **What did you do?**

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

- The MPA 650 teaching/ assessment team (program directors and adjunct faculty) conducted a telephone conference in April of 2009 to discuss the course learning outcomes, their connection with the program outcomes, assessment instruments, and procedures for the comprehensive case analysis blind review.
- The MPA 650 comprehensive exams were rated on a 1-5 grading scale for each student in their last semester with the qualitative feedback (assessment write-up) provided by the three-person blind review panel for each student.
- The Pre-MPA 650 student surveys (learning gaps) for individual cohorts were assessed using a 1-3 scale. Students were encouraged to provide written comments. That qualitative data was analyzed as well. The survey is administered through individual MPA 650 course sites on Blackboard, or in class.
- The Public Budgeting faculty (MPA 633), the program director and associate program director conducted telephone conferences in November and December of 2008 to discuss and update the course curriculum, learning objectives and their relevance to Program Outcome #9. The adoption of a new textbook as well as improved and standardized spreadsheet assignments, and the inclusion of a relevant case analysis were the outcomes of the faculty/director exchanges.



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

- The Human Resource Management and Planning faculty (MPA 636), the program director and associate director met in April of 2009 and revised the course curriculum and learning objectives as related to Program learning Outcome #5. A more effective adaptation of the course's hybrid format to course goals and learning outcomes was an important outcome of the meeting.
- The Emerging Technologies for Public Managers (MPA638) faculty and program director and associate program director conducted a telephone conference in April of 2009 to discuss and update the course curriculum, learning objectives and their relevance to Program Outcome #3. The discussion resulted in better adaptation of the course's hybrid format to the course goals, learning outcomes, and assignments. The linkage between Program Learning Outcome #3 and the course learning outcomes was reinforced.
- The primary agenda for the May 9, 2009 Annual Public Administration faculty meeting was program and individual course learning outcomes and best to ensure their mutual reinforcement and assessment. Approximately thirty adjunct faculty joined the full time faculty and program directors to share their experiences and ideas for effectively assessing learning outcomes. There was consensus that the learning outcomes #2 and #6 in the Emerging Technologies course (MPA 638) either should be revised or eliminated, and it was recommended that an international perspective to the Public Policy Analysis course (MPA 632) should be strengthened. We are considering these recommendations.
- In 2004-2005 the MPA and BPA programs completed a self-study and were evaluated by external reviewers. We accepted and implemented most of the reviewers' recommendations (see attached). We are preparing for the 2010-2011 program review which may coincide with a NASPAA self-study if the Dean supports our desire to pursue accreditation.

b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

We are generally pleased with student performance on the culminating program experiences described above and their demonstrated learning related to our program goals. However, we recognize assessment is an evolving and ongoing process. We are eager to develop, implement and evaluate surveys designed to



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

measure faculty, student and alumni satisfaction with learning as defined by course and program objectives. The student pre-MPA 650 survey is a start, but we need to design and implement more comprehensive survey instruments for faculty, students and alumni.

We are discussing how better to assess end-of-course student learning, including integrating faculty reports, pre-and post-program examinations, and transcript analyses. We will continue to involve adjunct faculty in the process inasmuch as the majority of courses are taught by them. Whether we pursue NASPAA accreditation or not, we plan to adopt their guidelines as we further development and implement meaningful and practical assessment measures.

c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

- The ongoing review of course syllabi, course requirements and expectations, faculty evaluation of student work, and SUMMA evaluations undoubtedly will lead to further changes in the curriculum and program and course learning outcomes.
- Faculty teams will meet in the 2009-2010 academic year to design end—of-course student assessments as well as possible pre-and post-program examinations and transcript analyses. In addition, student and faculty self-assessment instruments will be developed and implemented.
- Program administration will consider compiling and maintaining an MPA student performance database, which would include student grades/scores for each of the course assignments and the comprehensive case analysis exam scores and reviewers' qualitative feedback.

13. Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:

- a. Program Mission
- b. Program Learning Goals
- c. Program Learning Outcomes
- d. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome
- e. **MPA Comprehensive Case Analysis Exam Review and Assessment Criteria**

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2009

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard



2008-2009 Assessment Plan Report

copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).