

Program Assessment Report

Public Administration

2008-09

Program Mission

The mission of the Public Administration program is to educate and prepare administrators and policy analysts to pursue leadership and management positions at the local, state, and national levels.

Program Goals

- To provide education for, and develop the competencies of, public service professionals, with particular emphasis on the needs of government and non-profit organizations in central California
- To encourage participation of MPA core faculty in community affairs as a way of contributing to the capacity of local and regional government to deliver effective public services
- To conduct research that will enhance the knowledge and skills in the practice and teaching of public administration
- To support diversity within the MPA curriculum and engage in recruitment and retention efforts that foster a diverse faculty and MPA student population

Student Learning Objectives

- Students have sound and appropriately comprehensive knowledge of the problem-context and environment of public administration
- Students have sound and appropriately comprehensive knowledge of organizational decision-making processes
- Students have appropriate personal competencies in problem analysis and decision-making

Assessment Methods

Student progress toward the program's learning objectives is assessed in individual courses through the use of graded exams, essays, research papers, and presentations. Faculty members select the mix of tests and assignments appropriate for the assessment of student learning in particular areas based on their individual expertise.

Masters of Public Administration students are also required to complete one of two capstone exercises: comprehensive examinations or a thesis. These exercises form the primary means of assessing student progress toward the program's learning objectives.

At the completion of the Spring Term, a year-end meeting is held for the purpose of assessing student learning. The meeting is composed of two parts. During the first half, Masters of Public Administration students will be invited to discuss their experiences and concerns with faculty members. During the second half, faculty members meet privately to discuss the results of the capstone exercises and their perceptions of student learning over the course of the year.

Direct Assessment

Table I: CSU Stanislaus Master of Public Administration Program Comprehensive Examinations

Term	Winter 07	Spring 07	Spring 08	Winter 09	Spring 09
Pass Rate	18%	100%	100%	30%	100%

Summary: The table above reflects the results for students taking the Master of Public Administration Comprehensive Examinations within the last three years. Pass rates differ widely between Winter and Spring terms due to the fact that students are allowed one attempt to retake a failed section of the examination. Retakes occur in the Spring term, leading to the higher pass rate during that period. The examinations are extremely rigorous and are intended to function as both an assessment tool and an opportunity for further student learning. The high retake pass rate indicates that over the course of the exercise, most students who attempt the examination exit the program with the knowledge and skills required to succeed in the field of public administration.

Trend data

