

California State University, Stanislaus  
**Public Administration (MPA)**  
**Graduate Annual Assessment Report 2008-09 AND Assessment Plan 2009-10**

**Mission, Goals, Objectives**

**1. 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.

**2. Six Graduate Learning Goals**

- a. Advanced knowledge, skills, and values appropriate to the discipline.
- b. Ability to be creative, analytical, critical thinkers.
- c. Ability to work as individual researchers/scholars as well as in collaboration with others in contributing to the scholarship of their disciplines, as appropriate.
- d. Relevant knowledge of the global perspectives appropriate to the discipline.
- e. Knowledge of new and various methods and technologies as appropriate to the discipline.
- f. Advanced oral and written communication skills, complemented, as appropriate to the discipline, by the ability to access and analyze the information from a myriad of primary, print, and technological sources.

**3. 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

**4. Program 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

5. **Curriculum Map** (Alignment of Program Core Courses, Graduate Learning Goals, Program Student Learning Objectives, Assessment Methods, Instructional Emphasis, and Primary Assessment Methods)

**Assessment Report/Update for AY 2008-09**

- ❖ What measures were used this year to determine that graduates have achieved the stated program learning objectives?
  - **NASPAA Self-Study Report (External Accreditation) to be submitted August, 2009.**
  - **Direct measures of student learning include tests, essays, projects, presentations, and comprehensive exams.**
  - **Indirect measures of student learning include course evaluations, focus groups with graduates, and alumni surveys.**
- ❖ How did the program interpret the evidence found from each of the measures listed above? What was the process for interpreting the evidence?
  - **Program faculty analyzed the data during regular program meetings and re-accreditation self-study preparation.**
  - **Faculty maintained regular communication with program alumni (through institutionalized networks) and community stakeholders through outreach events. In the course of program administration, for instance internship coordination, evidence was obtained on an informal basis.**
- ❖ If changes for improving the program or student learning were recommended, what resources will be needed to implement those changes effectively? What other challenges, if any, will impact the program's ability to effectively implement those changes?
  - **On-going assessment of the comprehensive examination process identified the need for minor changes to the process. In particular, a special topics course is implemented (Winter 2010) in conjunction with exams to focus on clarifying the case study component on the exam.**

## Assessment Plan for AY 2009-10

- ❖ Describe the program assessment plan including its design and implementation.
  - **Identify the program student learning objectives that will be assessed in the current plan and the rationale for assessing those objectives.**
    - No changes from 2008-9
  - **Identify and describe the indirect measures (e.g., assessments that are based on perceptions of student learning - surveys, interviews, focus groups, course or program student evaluations) and direct measures (e.g., assessments of actual student learning - tests, essays, thesis, and presentations) that will be used to assess the program student learning objectives.**
    - No changes from 2008-9

- **Identify how and when these measures will be implemented and the parties responsible for collecting and analyzing the data.**

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 the 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. In particular, the effectiveness of the comprehensive exam preparation course will be assessed.

- **Identify any other assessment activities that will be carried out to assess the program student learning objectives (e.g., meetings, workshops, consultation, funding requests).**
  - **We would like to continue stakeholder outreach activities such as workshops and focus groups with alumni and public service professionals to assess how well our graduates meet community needs.**
  - We propose revising the graduate exit survey.
  - We will re-examine the universe of potential electives outside of Politics and Public Administration.