**COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM
REVIEW FOR THE MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
2009-2016**

SPRING 2016

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Executive Summary for the Masters in Public Administration Program

The Masters' Degree in Public Administration is one of the largest graduate degree programs at Columbus State University. Two main programmatic goals need to be met.1) How to better service the Columbus community and beyond? and 2) How to assure national accreditation? This report details the challenges and opportunities to satisfy these goals. While the MPA program is a large program, there are several areas where it can be refined. 1) Full time faculty should not be teaching 4-4 graduate course loads. This was the operational structure for the past several years. This is a poor design for both teaching and academic research. 2) The course rotation is part of the challenge. The program seeks to offer all core classes in house and online for both fall and spring semesters. This becomes a challenge because some full time faculty have political science teaching obligations as well. MPA faculty are spread too thin to be able to cover the core classes effectively. 3) Some faculty received their training from online institutions. The National Accrediting Association for Public Administration does not have a policy about faculty who have obtained their degrees from online institutions. However, there are concerns whether such institutions academic rigor is sufficient for a graduate program seeking national accreditation. 4) Faculty research publication achievements are below average. The main challenge is that faculty have been over extended making it difficult to produce credible publications. This becomes a challenge in terms of seeking national accreditation. 5) MPA faculty are also presented with the same challenges of presenting their research at conferences. There needs to be adequate funding so faculty particularly graduate ones will have the opportunity to present. Admittedly, the Domin Conference is helpful, but faculty need share and collaborate ideas with scholars around the country.

There are several strengths to the MPA program. 1) It is one of the largest programs at Columbus State University. 2) It is tightly connected to the MCCC Captains Career Course Program connected to Fort Benning. This means military captains can complete the MA with just 27 credits plus comprehensive exam. The development of the Capstone Class has been very successful. Graduate student success rate on the comprehensive exams has jumped from 55-80% first time success rate. The main reason is that Capstone offers students the chanced to go through a series of practice exams. This is particularly beneficial to the students. 3) MPA students are likely to complete the program. 4) There has been three traditional tracks, government, healthcare, and justice tracks. The majority of the students are governmental track. However, there are new initiatives and three new tracks have been added. They are Environment, Campaigns, and Urban Policy. Additionally, the Philosophy part of the Department is also being integrated into the teaching Ethics of Public Administration classes. Questions do remain about whether there are enough qualified faculty to adequately cover these tracks. 5) There is a concentrated effort to integrate other university departments to teach for the program, though this has yet to be tested. 6) There is a very strong rapport between faculty and students and this can serve both as a recruitment tool and a conduit to hear new ideas to strengthen the program.

Overall, the MPA program is viable. **The main challenges are satisfying the national accreditation requirements of 50% all MPA core classes to be taught by full time faculty. This can be done, but it has to be done on a rotating method. This means that all core classes should not be taught both online and in class each semester. It is not sustainable since MPA faculty have undergraduate teaching commitments as well.** The Department hired four new professors from nationally accredited universities. This is a major step. An additional faculty search for a health policy expert failed in 2016. However, a new search is necessary. Junior faculty should be paired with senior faculty to help them adjust to the teaching and research guidelines as well as makes adequate tenure and promotion progress. There is a lot of hope and the degree has been a major benefit to both student and beyond. Still, National Accreditation must be secured and a clear tangible plan must be developed to reach this goal. New faculty have been hired, and pointed strategic course development and planning can make this goal reality. Satisfactory -

Brief Program Overview

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is the degree for students with professional goals related to public service in areas such as government agencies, health organizations, justice administration/law enforcement as well as not-for-profit organizations, and the private sector. The mission of the MPA Program at Columbus State University is to provide professional education and leadership skills for effective, efficient, and responsive public service necessary for individuals preparing for or currently serving in public service careers. The program structure is designed to accommodate students currently employed in the public sector as well as students seeking entry level positions by offering classes in the evenings, on-line, as well as on Saturdays.

Columbus State University's MPA program offers curricular tracks in: ♦ Environmental Policy, which focuses on state and national efforts dealing with the environment and natural resources; ♦ Government Administration, a generalist track which can also be tailored to students' specific needs; ♦ Health Service Administration, which is especially suited to students who move from providing services directly to supervisory and programmatic responsibilities; and ♦ Justice Administration, which focuses on professionals in law enforcement, corrections, and related fields.

Program Mission and Its Relation to the CSU Mission

- To Lead and Mange in Public Governance
- To Participate in and Contribute the Public Policy Process
- To Analyze, Synthesize, Think Critically, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions
- To Articulate and Apply a Public Service Perspective
- To Communicate and Interact Productively with a Diverse and Changing Workforce and Citizenry

CSU MISSION STATEMENT

Attract a higher percentage of students with the motivation and preparation to complete a degree

Employ more creative instructional methods to meet the needs of diverse students (nontraditional, traditional, first generation, international, honors, graduates)

Increase student academic and social engagement and sense of belonging

Sustain the university's growth by focusing resources in areas with strong potential based on emerging opportunities

Improve faculty/staff retention, job satisfaction, and productivity

Improve stewardship through leadership in sustainability programs, the efficient use of resources, and external partnerships

Stakeholders Satisfaction with the Program - Satisfactory

There are many stakeholders. This includes students, faculty and the general community. As a whole, the MPA program has been well received by the students. However, there is some resistance from students towards complying with the high standards that the university has set. More information is needed and survey data will be important to further substantiate stakeholder perspectives.

Relationship of Program to Needs of Students and Societal Demands - Satisfactory

There is a strong correlation between student needs and societal demands. Government sector and other state and local entities have a need for graduate students who have a sound fundamental set of analytic skills. The MPA program trains students in this area.

Quality of Faculty-Very Weak

The MPA program has 5 full time faculty and 5 part time faculty. The overall qualifications have been very weak. There has been limited efforts to publish in the Public Administration field. Further, two of the full time faculty had for profit degrees as opposed to the traditional university set doctoral programs. However, three new faculty have been hired from nationally accredited universities. The goal is to continue to recruit from national and high ranked universities.

Appropriateness of Faculty Credentials-Very Weak

This has been a glaring program weakness but concerted efforts have been made to faculty from top ranked schools. Further, these new faculty have the requisite skills to publish which will be integral for securing national accreditation.

Use of Part Time Faculty-Satisfactory

Part time faculty have been particularly useful in terms of the Justice track and some core classes. All part time as well full time faculty must be approved through the Graduate Council, which further adds legitimacy to the program.

Diversity of Faculty- Very Weak

This has been a concern. There is only one African American faculty member and for 2014-2015, there were no other minority representation. However, a minority faculty member was hired during the 2016 job search.

Opportunities for Faculty Development-Satisfactory

This has been a concern because prior to 2016, all graduate faculty were required to teach a 4/4 teaching load at the graduate level. This approach crowds out opportunity to conduct research integral for faculty development and national accreditation.

Program Improvement Plans-Above Average

The central program improvement plan has been through recruitment. This past year, three new faculty have been hired. Each new faculty member comes for a nationally accredited university. Each faculty member has the ability to publish within their specified area of research. New faculty will only be teaching 3/3 which will allow them to conduct meaningful research. Three new tracks have been created to allow for greater program depth and attract more competitive students.

Quality of the Teaching-Satisfactory

Good teaching has several measures. The best quantifiable measure is the student evaluation. An acceptable score is a 4 on the Likert scale of 1-5. Areas of concern are when faculty member repeatedly exhibit scores in the 3's or even less. Good research leads to good teaching and good teaching leads to good research. Efforts must be made to develop and promote this recursive relationship.

Indicators of Good Advising-Satisfactory

Advising was conducted by the Assistant Director of the MPA program. However, efforts have been made to centralize the program. There is no longer an Assistant Director. Further, is conducted exclusively by the MPA Director. However, efforts are underway to train a full time faculty member how to advise.

Departmental Reward System-Satisfactory

The rubric is the same as with the political science department. Faculty must pass the pre tenure review and successfully pass tenure. However, there needs to be clearer guidelines as to research contributions. This is critical for meeting national accreditation standards.

Program Improvement Plans-Satisfactory

The most integral plan has been to replace faculty with online degrees with faculty from nationally accredited universities. Good research leads to good teaching and vice versa. Faculty will also be teaching a 3-3 load which will make easier to conduct meaningful research. The plan is to hire a health track specialist which will enable the program to grow and meet its true potential.

Quality of Research and Scholarship-Satisfactory

This is a weak area. Faculty have not published within the public administration domain. This is integral for seeking national accreditation. However, three new full time faculty members have been hired and one faculty member transitioned from a lecturer to a tenure track position.

Opportunity for Student Research Projects-Satisfactory

The main opportunities are for students to present their research at the Georgia Political Science Conference or at the Domin Graduate Research Conference. The latter is held at Columbus State University which makes it easier for students to present. However, research presentation may be presently at odds with the MPA program. The program is designed to train students to pass the comprehensive program. More emphasis needs to placed on research and pertinent findings.

Faculty Publications, Presentations and Grants-Below Average

Faculty publications are below average. Faculty need to be encouraged to conduct research connected to the core principles supported by the MPA program. Students need to see that faculty have a particular expertise. It adds critical legitimacy to the program. Some faculty have presented but it remains unclear as to whether presentations lead to publications.

Program Improvement Plan-Satisfactory

New faculty will only be teaching a 3/3/. This will avail new professors the chance to delve further into their areas of research. Faculty will no longer teach all of their classes in the graduate program. This will protect against faculty burnout. Some faculty were compelled to teach all day Saturday classes. Now, faculty time is protected and schedules are made so that they will have ample time prep and conduct research.

Quality of Service-Satisfactory

There are several activities that will enhance faculty service. First, faculty should be encouraged to develop outreach plans to recruit new students. Current programs have addressed national, state and local debates. The Department co-sponsored "A March to Selma" and participated Presidents Day in Plains, Georgia. Department Service has also featured Constitution Day which is a faculty sponsored lecture event. Faculty have participated in the Diversity Planning Day. Faculty also speak at the Library lecture series. Faculty serve on the College Personnel Committee and post tenure committee. Some faculty work directly with the media and appear on local television. Some faculty write op-ed pieces for the Ledger Enquirer. One faculty member serves on the board for the River Valley Regional Commission. Another faculty member serves as a mediator for the local courts.

Program Improvement Plan-Satisfactory

The main focus should be directed to the new faculty and encourage them to pursue and balance their service component.   New faculty should be encouraged to pursue one service component at time whether it is serving on a committee or directing an educational event. Research should not be diminished in lieu of service.

QUALITY OF FACULTY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS-Satisfactory

Faculty have received the best writer award, the Bill Chappel Graduate Faculty Award, Best Teacher of the university award and some faculty have received significant merit based salary increases. However, there needs to be greater oversight from the university towards award evaluation. The highest levels of meritocracy must be practiced at all times.

Students have received the Best Political Science award. There also is the Mario Mion Faculty award which also recognizes the achievement of the top political science students.

Graduate Achievements – The MPA program is currently being restructured to achieve national accreditation. Most faculty are currently employed upon entering the program. However, students will be encouraged to apply for nationally competitive programs such as the Presidential Management Fellows program. Three new policy tracks, Urban, Environmental, and Political Campaigns have been added to the MPA program. The plan is to make the program competitive nationally.

Quality of Curriculum-Satisfactory

The MPA curriculum is consistent with national programs. It is a 36 credit based program. Students take 21 core credits including a 3 credit capstone class. The remaining 15 credits are satisfied through one of the available tracks. Students must pass a comprehensive exam to receive the degree. Students must also graduate with a 3.0.

Relationship Between Program's Curriculum and its Outcomes-Satisfactory

The curriculum is designed to provide students with a complex yet measured perspective about achieving governmental efficiency. A prima facie explanation suggests that program outcomes are being met. However, this is a generally observable assessment. Program exist surveys must be conducted to substantiate these findings.

Incorporation of Technology-Satisfactory

Students main technological assessment is computer availability. This has not been a general concern. However, accessing university sources from remote locations has been an issue. Therefore, it will be integral to continue to monitor this concern.

Utilization of Multidisciplinary Approaches-Satisfactory

This is a concern. The program has made attempts to standardize all reading materials. However, this presents a problem in terms of creativity and over analysis. Students need to be introduced to a wide array of research sources and PA thinkers. Students also need to present their research findings at research conferences. Too often students, want to take online classes and participate in very limited internship opportunities.

Utilization of Multicultural Perspectives-Satisfactory

Again, students need to take diverse faculty and be introduced to competing perspectives. Some of this is addressed via Capstone and the Comprehensive Exam. Students need to justify one approach but also argue against other competing approaches.

Program Improvement Plans-Satisfactory

The best approach is to continue to recruit from nationally accredited universities. Good research leads to good teaching vice versa. Much of the program gaps link to faculty quality. Concerted efforts have been made to reverse this trend.

Quality of Facilities and Equipment-Satisfactory

MPA facilities have greatly improved with the renovation of Howard Hall. It is a state of the art classroom and it is a very conducive environment to teach. Students have complained of limited library hours and trouble accessing CSU material from distant locations.

Program Improvement Plans-Satisfactory

The main thing has been accomplished which is the renovation of Howard Hall. However, the library should be consulted in reference to ensuring students have access to key journals and that they are able to access sources materials from remote locations.

INDICATORS OF PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY: Program productivity can be defined by enrollment, degrees awarded, comparison with other USG programs and overall graduation rate

Degree Program Course Requirements

Area 1 Core Required Hours: 21

MPAC 7106 Survey of Public Administration *mandatory in first semester
MPAC 7116 Public Personnel Administration
MPAC 7126 Public Budgeting/Financial Administration
MPAC 7136 Research Methods for Administration
MPAC 7146 Organization Theory and Behavior
MPAC 7156 Legal and Ethical Environment of Administration
MPAC 7766 Capstone Course in Public Administration *mandatory in final semester, online only course

Area 2 Concentration Required Hours: 15

Government Administration: 15 semester hours of MPAG coursework numbered 5000G or higher, or substitutions as approved by the Program Director.

Health Service Administration: 15 semester hours of MPAH coursework numbered 5000G or higher, or substitutions as approved by the Program Director.

Justice Systems Administration: 15 semester hours of MPAJ coursework numbered 5000G or higher, or substitutions as approved by the Program Director.

Area 3 Additional Requirements Required Hours: 0

MPAC 7000 MPA Comprehensive Exam *Exam offered Online only

Total Hours Required: 36

Department of Political Science and MPA

Program: MPA
Quantitative Measures

Measure	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	
Number of Declared Majors - Fall Semester						
Full-Time	81	54	70	50	48	
Part-Time	136	152	151	104	117	
Total	*217*	*206*	*221*	*154*	*165*	
Number of Degrees Conferred - Fiscal Year	*58*	*56*	*70*	*39*	*44*	
Credit Hour Production - Fall Semester	714	621	912	1029	1026	
Average Course Enrollment - Fall Semester	12	14	15	14	15	
Number of Faculty						
Full-Time Faculty	6	4	5	4	6	
Part-Time Faculty	6	7	8	10	5	
Departmental Budget - Fiscal Year						
State Funds						
Grant Funds						
Total	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	
Cost per Major - Fiscal Year						
(Total Expenditures/Number of Declared Majors)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
(State Funds/Number of Declared Majors)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
Credit Hours Taught Fall and Spring Semesters	1,665	1,605	2,322	2,334	1,803	
Cost per Credit Hour - Total Expenditures	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
Cost per Credit Hour - State Funds	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
Percent of Non-Productive Grades						
(i.e., W, WF, F, and U)	11.69%	12.15%	12.52%	9.43%	6.79%	
GRE and GPA Averages - Fall Semester						
Average GRE Score	858	825	828	884	899	
Average Graduate GPA	3.46	3.44	3.39	3.46	3.48	
Enrollment by Gender - Fall Semester						
Female	100	102	112	95	96	
Male	117	104	109	59	69	
Total	*217*	*206*	*221*	*154*	*165*	

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity - Fall Semester					
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1	1	1	2
Asian	0	2	2	1	0
Black or African American	73	91	100	76	75
Hispanic or Latino	7	5	9	6	10
International Student	2	2	4	2	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
Two or More Races	3	3	3	5	1
White	131	102	102	63	76
Race and Ethnicity Unkown	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*217*	*206*	*221*	*154*	*165*
Enrollment by Age - Fall Semester					
Under 21	0	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	41	34	48	46	44
26 - 30	33	44	47	36	41
31 - 40	66	57	65	40	44
41 - 50	58	50	46	21	20
51 - 60	14	17	13	8	14
Over 60	5	4	2	3	2
Total	*217*	*206*	*221*	*154*	*165*
Average Age	*37*	*36*	*35*	*33*	*33*

Graduate Degrees Awarded in MPA Programs at USG State Universities

USG Institution	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	5-Year Avg
Albany State University	26	21	27	10	28	22
Armstrong Atlantic State University						
Georgia Regents University	15	13	10	11	10	12
Clayton College & State University						
Columbus State University	58	56	70	39	44	53
Fort Valley State university						
Georgia College & State Univ	35	37	40	19	11	28
Georgia Southwestern State University						
Kennesaw State University	37	34	58	41	31	40
University of North Georgia	10	6	10	9	2	7
Savannah State University	10	16	21	10	5	12
Southern Polytechnic State University						
State University of West Geor	14	8	5	9	14	10
Total	205	191	241	148	145	186

Enrollment in Program for Past 5 Years

2011 217

2012 206

2013 221

2014   154

2015   165

Total -52 or -24%

Enrollment is robust but there has been an enrollment decline in 2014 and 2015. Some of this can be attributed to the separation from Command College. At the same time, it also reflects need to continue to recruit high level faculty.

Degrees Awarded Over Past 5 Years

2011 73   70.9%

2012 69   62.7%

2013 67   66.3%

2014   60   64.5%

2015   54   55.7%

The above chart reveals the number of students graduating within five years of original enrollment. Both aggregate number of student and percentage have dropped. This may have to do with the fact that standards have tightened. It also reveals that transitory nature of higher education. Students constantly are on the move and may not have time complete a program

Comparison With CSU & University system of Georgia. The MPA program is a regional leader in graduating students with an MPA. This fact should be used as a recruitment tool.

Retention Rates

2010   87   77%

2011   76   75.2%

2012   73   77.7%

2013   79   74.5%

2014   37   66.1%

The retention rates have been very good. These data reveal that most students who enter the program will complete it. However, retention numbers have dropped as well as overall retention percentages.

Student Learning Indicators (using a variety of data sources)

The MPA enrollment and retention rates are robust. However, there is a glaring inconsistency as to whether student learning indicators are being met. Therefore, survey data will be need to ask student whether learning outcomes are being met. There also needs to be a neutral independent third party to monitor these responses. These individuals could be alumnae or from the general Columbus community.

Graduation Rate of Program

2011	**73**	**70.9%**
2012	**69**	**62.7%**
2013	**67**	**66.3%**
2014	**60**	**64.5%**
2015	**54**	**55.7%**

Graduation rates are robust though there has been dip in 2014 and 2015. Over all Columbus State MPA program graduates more student than any of its USG counterparts.

Cost Effectiveness of Instructional Delivery-Below Average

This a complex assessment. On the one faculty salaries are below fair market value and this suggests cost effectiveness. However, low salaries have been a hindrance towards recruiting qualified faculty. Further, faculty productivity over the long run is poor when required to teach four graduate classes a semester. Therefore, faculty teaching should be monitored to ensure ultimate productivity.

Summary of Program's Viability-Satisfactory

The MPA is program is a program in transition. It has recently separated from the Command College. As a results both retention and graduation rates have declined. However, the MPA program still produces the largest number of comparable USG institutions. In fact, it has consistently been a leader in generating MPA graduates. The program has recently expanded with three additional tracks. Each track is designed to

broader candidate appeal and distinguish the program. More faculty are need to help solidify these programs. However, four new faculty were hired this year from nationally accredited universities. The main changes are the following 1) hire a full time tenure track health professional, 2) seek national accreditation 3) expand job placement to the national level 4) develop meaningful internship opportunities and 5) maintain a balance between in class and online classes. The proposed changes will occur during the 2016-2017 year and beyond.

Summary of Program Improvement Plan-Satisfactory

The main areas for program improvement involve the following

-continue national faculty recruitment
-make sure that the new tracks are viable and students can take course in each of the tracks
-encourage faculty to publish in their own fields of interest
-encourage the use multicultural sources
-work with consultants this summer to get program accredited.