San Francisco State University
Department of Public Administration

Academic Program Review / Accredited Degree Program Standards Report

Programs:
M.P.A. (Master of Public Administration)

Fall 2007

The enclosed accredited degree program standards report as well as the Accreditation Self-Study has been reviewed by the faculty in the instructional unit and is now submitted for approval. Accreditation has been granted in July 2007 by the Commission of Program Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).

________________________________________
Department Chair Signature
Date

Drafts have been read and deemed ready for APRC review by:

________________________________________
College Dean Signature
Date

________________________________________
Associate Vice President Academic Planning and Educational Effectiveness
Date

________________________________________
Dean of Graduate Studies Signature
Date
### Table 14

**Grid to accompany narrative submitted by accredited programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Is standard being met?</th>
<th>Location discussed in accreditation reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University-wide standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.0 ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Evidence of Prior Academic Success</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met; 100% of applicants meet this standard.</td>
<td>112-113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Evidence of Competent Writing</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met; 100% required to take and pass GET; if do not pass, must take writing course.</td>
<td>Admissions materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 English Preparation of Non-Native Speakers</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met; 100% non-Native Speakers must meet minimum TOEFL score.</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Overview of Program Admissions Policy</td>
<td>Standard is met.</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.0 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Number of course offerings</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. 12 offered in SP07; 13 in Fall 07 plus 2 in San Mateo Cohort Program.</td>
<td>Appendix 1 here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Frequency of course offerings</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. Core courses 2-3 times per year / Electives 1x per 3 semesters.</td>
<td>69, 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Path to graduation</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. Available at <a href="http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa">http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa</a> and <a href="http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/documents/steps_to_graduation.pdf">http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/documents/steps_to_graduation.pdf</a>; Self-Study indicates 7 semester median to graduation, 6 is mode.</td>
<td>72-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Course distribution on GAP</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. No undergraduate courses in M.P.A. curriculum. One elective (PA 782 / 582) is paired. Undergraduate courses from other departments are allowed in elective emphases.</td>
<td>37, 63, 64-68, 74-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Class size</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. 2 classes in 03-04 were 32; one class in 05-06 was 37. Since, have reduced admissions and no classes over 30.</td>
<td>93-94, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Number of graduates</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. Average of 34 graduates per year over 5 years; most recent were 48 (04-05), 43 (05-06), and 40 (06-07).</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.0 FACULTY REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Number of Faculty in Graduate Program(s)</td>
<td>Yes, standard is met. As of Fall 2007 will have 6.0 FTE, including one replacement search in 07-08.</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Number of Faculty per Concentration</td>
<td>Yes, standard will be met after curriculum proposal was approved by Senate. Have at least one for all emphases after deleting Integrated and Collaborative Service Delivery.</td>
<td>124-125 curriculum revision proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program-Specific Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS</td>
<td>Yes, the standards are met.</td>
<td>9-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0 THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Yes, the standards are met.</td>
<td>44-45, 73-74, 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0 THE PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY</td>
<td>Yes, the standards are met.</td>
<td>53, 90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0 THE FACULTY EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Yes, the standards are met.</td>
<td>98, 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 RESOURCE SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM</td>
<td>Yes, the standards are met.</td>
<td>Section 10 here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 3.0 Admission Requirements

### 3.1 Evidence of Prior Academic Success

The Department of Public Administration meets the University standard of a 3.0 minimum grade point average for admissions. As shown on pages 112 and 113 of the Self-Study, all Program materials and Figure 1, the Department of Public Administration requires a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average for admissions. Further, this standard is strictly maintained, as seen in Figure 1. The median grade point average for the past three years has only been as low as 3.4 in one semester and is typically 3.5 or 3.6 but the minimum grade point average of any admitted student has never gone below 3.0.

#### Figure 1: Grade Point Averages of Department of Public Administration Admitted Students, Spring 2004 – Fall 2007

### 3.2 Evidence of Competent Writing

As required by the new standards, all students are required to produce evidence of competent writing. Public Administration students all take the San Francisco State
University Graduate Essay Test and must achieve a passing grade (see all admissions materials and the Bulletin). Those who achieve only a marginal pass or who fail are required to pass an additional writing course.

3.3 English Preparation of Non-Native Speakers

The Department of Public Administration meets the University standard of requiring English preparation. As seen on page 109 of the Self-Study, all incoming international students must achieve at least a 550 on the paper based TOEFL, 213 on the computer based test, or 80 on the Internet based test. Students are never granted a waiver of the TOEFL requirement.

3.4 Overview of Program Admissions Policy

The admissions policy of the Department of Public Administration has changed in the past four years from one in which all students who met the minimum standards were accepted to one which is highly competitive. In Fall 2006, only 48 percent of those who applied were admitted to the Program. Fall 2007 presented an unusual situation, since we were doing one-time only admissions of the San Mateo County Cohort Program students. Fifty-three percent of the San Mateo and on-campus applicants together were admitted. This means that on-campus applicants were admitted at a far lower rate, since informational meetings in San Mateo County had effectively educated applicants not to apply unless they met the standards.

4.0 Program Requirements

4.1 Number of Course Offerings

The Department of Public Administration more than meets the standard of two courses offered per term. The number of course offerings each semester ranges from 11 (Fall 2006) to 12 (Spring 2007) to 13 plus 2 in San Mateo (Fall 2007) graduate offerings per semester. Care is taken to ensure that electives are offered each term for each elective emphasis. Students are also allowed to take interdisciplinary electives from across the campus as well.

4.2 Frequency of Course Offerings

The Department of Public Administration meets the University standard of offering every course once every two years. Core courses are offered at least two times per year (the introductory PA 700 is offered three times per year) and electives are offered once every three semesters (pages 69 and 70, Self-Study).

Tentative course offerings are presented on the Program’s website at http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/schedule/tentative.htm. The tentative course schedule currently listed covers up to Spring 2010.

4.3 Path to Graduation

The Department of Public Administration meets the standard of providing a course schedule that clearly states a path to graduation allowing students to graduate
within five years. The Department of Public Administration’s paths to graduation are available at [http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/documents/steps_to_graduation.pdf](http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/documents/steps_to_graduation.pdf), as seen on pages 72 and 73 of the Self-Study.

Figure 4-2 on page 72 of the Self-Study shows clearly that, of those students in the 2005-2006 cohort, most graduated in six (mode) or seven (median) semesters. Only two students took ten semesters (including summers) to complete the program and 4 students took 11 semesters (including summers); therefore, all graduated in less than five years of consecutive work. Some took longer than five calendar years because they left the Program and then returned some time afterwards to complete the Program.

4.4 Course Distribution on GAP

The Department of Public Administration more than meets this University standard of at least 50 percent graduate courses in each student’s Graduate Approved Program.

In our case, each student’s GAP (Graduate Approved Program) will always contain at least 27 graduate units out of a total 39 to 43 units. The 27 units are comprised of 24 units of core courses plus the culminating experience. This means students will take a total of at least 62.8 to 69.2 percent graduate courses, depending on whether or not they take the internship class. In most cases, the total number of graduate units students take is higher, as at least one of their elective courses are also graduate courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graduate Units</th>
<th>Under graduate Units</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
<td>24 units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Units</td>
<td>Advise / Insist on at least 3 -6 units</td>
<td>Can include some upper division undergraduate units</td>
<td>12 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culminating Experience</td>
<td>3 units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>Fall 2007—4 units</td>
<td>Up until Spring 2007—4 units</td>
<td>4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>At least <strong>27 units (69.2%)</strong> with no internship / <strong>62.8% with internship</strong> up to Sp 07 / <strong>31 units (72.1%)</strong> after F07</td>
<td>Some elective units and internship up until Sp 07</td>
<td><strong>39 units when internship is waived / 43 units with internship</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Fall 2007, the Department of Public Administration will be using its own internship courses. Therefore, after Fall 2007, students taking the internship will complete at least 72.1 percent graduate courses.
Students may take upper division courses as part of their 12 unit elective requirement. However, they are advised that they must take some graduate course electives as well. As seen in the Self-Study (pp. 74-77), in no case did a student use undergraduate courses for all of their electives.

The Department of Public Administration curriculum has only one paired course, PA 782: Community and Economic Development.

4.5 Class Size

The Department of Public Administration now meets the University standard of maintaining a class size of between 8 and 30 students with an average class size of 19.9 students in 2005-2006. In 2006-2007 the average class size was 22.45. Core classes have more students than do elective courses. In 2006-2007, core classes had an average class size of 26.6 and elective courses had an average class size of 18.3.

- In Fall 2005, there were two electives with enrollments of 5 (PA 750: Public Financial Management) and 8 (PA 752: Public Administration and the Law) students, respectively. One class was comprised of 37 students in 2005-2006 as the result of the transition from one methods course to a two course sequence. In that case the class included students from two admissions cohorts waiting to enter that class and was an anomaly.
- By Spring 2006, however, all courses met the standard (one [PA 784: Intergovernmental Relations] appeared to be lower but it was cross-listed with Political Science and the total was greater than 8).
- In Fall 2006, only one course (PA 705: Research Methods and Analysis I) exceeded the standard by one student, at 31. This problem was alleviated by putting into place our plan for offering PA 705 and PA 706 two times per year, beginning Spring 2007. No courses were smaller than 8 students.
- In Spring 2007, all courses had class sizes between 8 and 30.

The Department of Public Administration saw a period of extreme growth beginning in 2003 and continuing until 2005; during this period, the Program struggled with class sizes that were too large. This growth has been contained by an active enrollment management strategy involving the reduction of admissions to the Program. Subsequently, class sizes have been reduced. During this period of growth, however, there were two classes in 2003-2004 that contained 32 students.

The Department of Public Administration now meets the University standard of no more than 30 students per class. Table 5-8 and Figure 5-2 on pages 94-95 of the Self-Study provide additional details.

4.6 Number of Graduates

Since 40 students graduated in 2006-2007, the Department of Public Administration meets the University standard of graduating at least an average of five
students per year over a five year period, with an average of 40.2 graduates over the period from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007 (40, 30, 48, 43, 40).

Figure 2-3 on page 8 of the Self-Study illustrates this finding for the five years beginning in 2001-2002 and ending in 2005-2006. The Program instituted a major change in the culminating experience options that took effect in the Fall of 2002 with the creation of a capstone course with a written comprehensive examination as an option. This Figure shows the enormous difference this change made in the number of graduates; before this change, the number of graduates ranged from 9 to 16 and after the change, the number of graduates ranged from 30 to 48.

5.0 Faculty Requirements
5.1 Number of Faculty in Graduate Program
The Department of Public Administration meets this standard of at least two faculty per graduate degree. Currently we have five tenure / tenure track faculty present plus one resignation in 2006-2007 (Dr. Laurie Paarlberg), for a total of 6.0 tenure / tenure track lines. We successfully conducted two faculty searches last year and those two new faculty members just arrived to teach in the Fall 2007 semester. We have been granted permission to search for a replacement for Dr. Paarlberg and that search is currently ongoing.

5.2 Number of Faculty per Concentration
Since our Spring 2007 curriculum proposal was approved by the Graduate Dean and Academic Senate, the Department of Public Administration meets the standard of at least one faculty member per elective emphasis. Within that proposal was the request to delete the Integrated and Collaborative Service Delivery elective emphasis. Dr. Marjorie Seashore was the advisor for that area; with her retirement, there is no other faculty member for that area. That and the low enrollments in that emphasis created the rationale for deleting the emphasis.

6.0 Program Planning Process
The Department of Public Administration meets the University standard of having an active planning process and using student learning outcomes assessment results to improve our Program. The Department of Public Administration began an active and continuing strategic planning process in 1998; the original plan was updated and changed three times as goals were achieved and new goals developed. An entirely new strategic plan was developed in 2006. The faculty will be having a retreat on August 24th to develop the implementation plan for the 2006 Strategic Plan.

Student learning outcomes assessment began in 2002. The assessment strategy has been refined over the years and is now quite comprehensive, including both direct and indirect measures of student learning outcomes. The comprehensive list of programmatic and curricular changes made as a result of this feedback is quite
extensive and includes changes in the culminating experience, internship course, information technology curriculum, and a new research methods course sequence.

The Self-Study contains an in-depth section on our Program’s strategic planning process (page 17-18) as well as the strategic plan itself (p. 9 - 17), including the SWOT analysis, mission statement, goals and objectives. In addition, our student learning outcomes assessment plan can be found from pages 18 to 20. Finally, statements of how the results have been used to change and improve our Program are found from pages 20 through 23.

The Department of Public Administration believes the performance of the Department and its mission and values should be fully transparent to all—students, faculty and community. Therefore, all of our strategic plan updates, all student learning outcome assessment results, and a document stating what changes have been made as a result of these processes are fully available to our students and the public on our website (http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/faculty/strategic_plan.htm).

7.0 Student Experience

The Department of Public Administration meets the University standards for student learning assessment, advising, writing proficiency, and culminating experience.

As discussed above, the assessment plan is available on our website and in the Self-Study as well as our assessment results. Learning goals are part of our strategic plan and have been mapped with our courses, resulting in a student portfolio. We are planning to move the portfolio (awarded NASPAA Best Practices as well as SFSU Best Practice award) to an e-portfolio format beginning in Fall 2007.

Advising standards are quite high and meet the goals of our original 2004 Advising Plan, seen on page 136 of the Self-Study. Students are encouraged to seek frequent advising. In addition, our newly designed website provides 24 / 7 / 365 advising information and students have been quite enthused with its offerings. We have a constantly updated Department of Public Administration Student Handbook available on our website and also provide a link to the Graduate Division’s Grad Guide.

The Department has made writing proficiency a crucial student learning goal (see Strategic Plan) and is pleased to say that, from a student perspective (see Exit Survey results in Self-Study, pp. 44-45), the results have been positive. Students perceive an improvement in their writing effectiveness. Faculty require an extensive amount of a variety of types of writing in all of our courses and students get feedback not just on content but also on their writing, spelling, and punctuation.

The culminating experience options were changed as a result of our strategic planning process, as we realized the traditional social science research (applied and basic) did not meet the needs of our professional program students. The faculty considered several different models and sought input from students and alumni before
changing to a capstone course and thesis options (described on pages 73 and 74 of the Self-Study). Several students per semester take the thesis option while most opt for the capstone, with its written comprehensive examination (called the Strategic Assessment Memorandum). The capstone format is one of case study analysis. Over time, the faculty have continued to develop and improve it. Faculty have worked hard to ensure the rigor of these two options, while also ensuring they are relevant for students’ professional and career goals. Both also serve to synthesize students’ experience in the degree program.

8.0 The Program and The Community

The Department of Public Administration meets University standards of involvement and commitment to professional engagement, civic engagement, equity and social justice and internationalization.

The faculty are quite involved professionally (see faculty vitae in Self-Study) with a variety of professional organizations (American Society for Public Administration, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, National Association for Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, American Political Science Association, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management and Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action) and have served in important leadership roles. Students and alumni are also active in at least the local chapters of these organizations (particularly the American Society for Public Administration), serving on the Board of Directors and participating in the now annual Bay Area ASPA Tournament. Pages 98 through 100 provide summaries of this faculty professional and community service.

As the Program has expanded, faculty and student civic engagement has increased. Most faculty require course projects and students typically choose agencies to use in completing those projects. For some courses, faculty work with agencies to provide a “learning lab”, conducting program evaluations or fund development plans. Virtually all faculty bring agency leaders into their courses to speak on their own experiences.

The new Strategic Plan brings civic engagement more emphasis to community engagement as a major goal and this, together with the introduction of the Program-sponsored internship, will give us a vehicle for expanding this commitment and experience with civic engagement.

The Department of Public Administration has always had a major emphasis on equity and social justice in its core mission of providing an education in the public service for its students. We stress diversity and equity as well as public service as core values and have integrated diversity and equity into our curriculum (from PA 760: Diversity in Public Organizations to talking about equity issues for revenue sources in PA 730: Managing Budgets—see page 53 of the Self-Study for coverage of diversity issues within and across the curriculum).
Finally, the Program is moving to enhance its emphasis on internationalization. We have a comparative nonprofit administration course, PA 749: Managing NGOs in an International Context and have taught Comparative Administration as a special topic course and will do so again. Our faculty have active research projects in South Africa (Naff with diversity in the South African national government and the now-resigned Paarlberg on nonprofit operations in South Africa) and are bringing that experience into their classes. Faculty members participate with the Office of International Programs in training international government managers, most recently by training Chinese government managers. In addition, the Program is working with the Office of International Programs to bring our degree program to China.

9.0 The Faculty Experience

The Department of Public Administration meets the University standards for faculty engagement. The Department of Public Administration faculty is quite active professionally, both in leadership roles in professional organizations and as active researchers and scholars (see pages 96-98 of the Self-Study for summaries of research activities as well as Table 5-10 [also page 98] for a summary of faculty research projects). As Table 5-10 indicates, for just one year (2005-2006), this five (at that time) person faculty produced 4 conference papers, five peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, 5 grant proposals, 2 funded projects and 8 technical or agency reports. Faculty activities can also be found in our biannual publication, Department of Public Administration Faculty Activities Report (http://bss.sfsu.edu/~mpa/documents/report/biannual_activity_report.pdf) for 2003 – 2005.

Faculty workload is covered in Table 5-9 on page 96 of the Self-Study. Note that the primary appointment of Professor Corey Cook, who has now left the University, was with the Department of Political Science.

Our program began as an interdisciplinary one and has continued in that tradition to some degree. Table 5-1 on page 83 of the Self-Study provides the breakdown of faculty degrees. Although the faculty tend to have similar degrees, most of the faculty’s academic experiences have been interdisciplinary.

10.0 Resource Support for the Program

Internal Support

Table 8-1 on page 142 of the Self-Study indicates the internal resources available to the Department of Public Administration. The Program has succeeded primarily because of its entrepreneurial nature and constant seeking of additional resources for its faculty and students. As a result, the Program has been able to supplement the very meager operating resources provided by the University with Concurrent Enrollment funds from Open University students to assist faculty with travel and projects. Several times, the Program has received equipment and technology dollars—and by combining administrative resources with the Criminal Justice Program,
the Program has been able to expand its office operating hours and administrative support.

A College of Extended Learning Special Sessions Program, the San Mateo County Cohort Program, has been approved and is beginning this Fall 2007. This program will be an important source of revenues for faculty travel and research support. The Program is also obtaining additional resources from the University by moving to the new Downtown Campus and we anticipate that just being on that site will enhance our visibility and program effectiveness.

The lack of adequate space is the largest issue for our Department, as it is for most others on the San Francisco State University campus. The space issue was of concern to our accreditation association, NASPAA. With the upcoming move to the Downtown Campus, however, these issues will be alleviated and the Department is most appreciative of the support and confidence shown in the Department from the Provost, the Dean and others, which led to the proposal for our move.

External Support

As Table 5-10 on page 98 of the Self-Study indicates, the faculty are actively seeking external funding. Several have attended ORSP workshops on obtaining grants as a way of implementing the goal of obtaining additional external support. We anticipate that, as our critical mass of faculty increases, we will be able to obtain additional external resources.

Conclusions

As shown in the narrative above and in the referenced Accreditation Self-Study, the Department of Public Administration and its M.P.A. degree program more than fulfill all university and program standards, as required by the 6th Cycle of Program Review. We believe we have developed into a high quality program that is recognized as such in our discipline, on our campus, and by our students, alumni and employers and the CSU in general.

This conclusion is supported by the accompanying letter from Dr. Meredith Newman, Chair of the Commission of Program Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), informing the Department of Public Administration of our successful full seven year re-accreditation.

We look forward to working with the Academic Program Review Committee in reviewing our program and answering any subsequent questions.