**Master of Public Administration**

## Program Assessment, 2009-2010

This report includes sections on recent milestones, issues, the mission statement, educational program objectives, program assessment methods; details of course based assessment of student learning, assessment results for 2009-2010, and a section on faculty involvement in program revision that is cumulative in nature.

**Recent Milestones:**

In 2009 the Hugo Wall School was reaccredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). This culminated a year-long self-study and site visit by a 3 member accreditation team. The accreditation team visited with faculty, students, university administrators, alumni and practitioners. Reaccreditation was for a period of 7 years. The only issue of concern to the accreditation team and to NASPAA was that of filling the director’s position. They indicated that this was not a question reflecting on the acting director, but an issue of having someone in the position to provide ongoing, highly visible leadership. They asked that we report annually on this issue until it was satisfactorily resolved. In 2009-2010 the issue of a permanent Director of the Hugo Wall School still existed, however it has since been resolved. Professor Nancy McCarthy Snyder was appointed Director of the Hugo Wall School in August 2010. Professor Snyder succeeds Professor John Wong who served as Acting Director from 2007 until 2010. Professor Wong left to take a position with the University of North Texas at Dallas (UNTD).

Accomplishments of the faculty were recognized when the Master of Public Administration degree program was ranked 17th in public finance by *U. S. News and World Report*. We are one of only three non-doctoral granting programs to achieve this level of recognition, and the only such program that does not offer multiple types of masters degrees. WSU’s MPA is ranked in the top third of all MPAs,

**Issues:**

In 2009 Regent’s Distinguished Professor of Public Finance, Bart Hildreth, resigned to accept the position of Dean of the School of Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University. The Master of Public Administration operated throughout academic year 2009-10 with reduced resources and the position has not yet been filled. A search has been approved for 2010-2011.

**Mission Statement of the Master of Public Administration:**

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program is an integrated part of the Hugo Wall School at Wichita State University. The School consists of the Master of Public Administration program, the Center for Urban Studies and the Kansas Public Finance Center. The MPA has been accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration since 2002. This process involved weekly meetings of the entire faculty. In 2007-2008, the faculty undertook a self-study for reaccreditation. Products from the self-study included a detailed mission statement that includes goals, objectives, action plans, and assessment mechanisms. These documents were submitted in the MPA’s 2008-2009 Assessment Report.

The **mission** of the Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs reads: “The Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs enhances the quality of public affairs and administration through: (1) excellence in instruction that prepares individuals for positions of leadership in management, finance, and policy for public and nonprofit organizations; (2) excellence in scholarship that expands and disseminates knowledge to audiences of academics, professionals and practitioners in government and nonprofit organizations; and, (3) excellence in service to Wichita State University and the profession of public administration.” Achievement of this mission requires that the faculty undertake consistent monitoring and assessment of changing professional practice in public and nonprofit management in order to insure that students are adequately prepared to compete in the job market and to be effective public servants.

This report addresses only the traditional mission of the Master of Public Administration degree. The instructional objective of the Master of Public Administration degree is intimately intertwined with its research and public service activities and may not be fully appreciated independently of those research and public service missions and their evolution at Wichita State University. The underlying theme of the Master of Public Administration program’s mission is commitment to public service. We educate students for the public service. Our research is focused on improving public policy, public management, and public finance. Our service activities focus on training local government and nonprofit practitioners to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their organizations and on providing technical assistance to solve problems in their communities. In sum, the interaction of teaching, research, and service synergize the Master of Public Administration degree program, creating a more productive and cost effective unit than would be possible if functions were segregated.

The **educational** **goal** of the Master of Public Administration program is to provide “Excellence in instruction that prepares individuals for positions of leadership and responsibility in public service.” The **objective** is to “Provide high quality graduate instruction in contemporary theories and practices of public administration.” The **action plan** involves “Having graduate students knowledgeable of relevant theory and its application.” Assessment requires that “Students will demonstrate an acceptable level of knowledge and its application.”

The following specific program objectives and assessment methods focus primarily on the teaching component of the Master of Public Administration program, which is the first item in the mission listed above. They describe subordinate goals and identify specific assessment methods.

**Educational Program Objectives:**

1. To provide students with a high level of understanding of core concepts in the field of public administration.
2. To give students who wish to specialize, the opportunity to obtain a Graduate Certificate in selected topics.
3. To prepare students for interviews with prospective employers by conducting mock interviews.
4. To place students in appropriate internships within local, state, and federal governments.
5. To assist students in finding professional positions in state and local government.

**Program Assessment Methods:**

1. Assessment of the quality of students understanding of key concepts in public administration is based on students’ performance in the eight core courses that all students must take. A specific objective and measure is provided for each course in the next section entitled course-based assessment of student learning. Data will be collected at the end of each semester and reported when required by the Graduate School.
2. Monitor the number of students attaining each of the Graduate Certificates and provide a list of those individuals.
3. Monitor the number of students participating in mock interviews.
4. Monitor the number of students placed in internships.
5. Monitor the number of graduates finding jobs within 12 months of graduation, and provide specific examples of student accomplishments in this respect.

**Details of Course Based Assessment of Student Learning:**

# PADM 702, Research Methods in Public Administration

Objective: Understanding of positivist research methods used to answer research questions in public administration.

Measure: Percentage of students achieving a grade of 80 percent or better in the course.

# PADM 710, Public Sector Organization Theory & Behavior

Objective: Understanding of the major ideas in the classical, neoclassical, humanist and systems theories and ability to apply these ideas of organizational theory and behavior.

Measure: Percentage of students attaining a grade of 80 percent or better on the case analyses included in the mid-term and final examinations.

# PADM 725, Public Management of Human Resources

Objective: Understanding of the major issues impacting human resources in the public sector.

Measure: Percentage of students attaining a grade of 80 percent or better in the course examination.

# PADM 745, Public and Nonprofit Governance

Objective: Understanding of the political environment of public administration.

Measure: Percentage of students attaining a grade of 80 percent or better in the course.

# PADM 765, Public Sector Economics

Objective: Understanding the economics of taxation and other governmental revenue sources.

Measure: Percentage of students receiving a grade of 80 percent or better on the final examination.

# PADM 802, Quantitative Methods for Public Sector Professionals

Objective: Students are expected to be able to formulate statistically testable propositions, perform appropriate analyses on an existing data set, and interpret those results.

Measure: Percentage of students achieving a grade of 80 percent or better on their main project.

# PADM 865, State and Local Government Finance

Objective: Understand and apply concepts of public finance and resource allocation in a federal form of government.

Measure: Percentage of students attaining a grade of 80 percent or better in the course.

# PADM 895, Public Decision Making

Objective: Students are expected to learn classical approaches to decision-making and how to apply those approaches.

Measure: Percentage of students receiving a grade of 80 percent or better on the final case analysis paper in the course.

**Assessment Results for 2009-2010 by Objective**

Objective 1: To provide students with a high level of understanding of core concepts in the field of public administration.

Assessment of this objective focuses on student performance in the eight core courses that all students must take.

The measure or desired student outcome for each core course is that 80 percent of students completing the course achieve a grade of either A or B. To do this they must demonstrate mastery of basic concepts in that course. The data in Table 1 show that most students are successfully learning basic concepts in each of the core courses in the MPA program.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TABLE 1 2009-2010** | |  |  |  |  |  |
| **MPA Percentage of Students Receiving A or B Grades 2009-2010** | | | | | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Core Course** | **Enrolled** | **Drop or Withdraw** | **A or B** | **C or less** | **Incomplete** | **% Passing with A or B** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 702 | 30 | 5 | 24 | 0 | 1 | 96% |
| 710 | 29 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 6 | 74% |
| 725 | 29 | 1 | 27 | 1 | 0 | 96% |
| 745 | 22 | 0 | 21 | 1 | 0 | 95% |
| 765 | 34 | 8 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 88% |
| 802 | 24 | 4 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 90% |
| 865 | 26 | 2 | 18 | 6 | 0 | 75% |
| 895 | 17 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 100% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \* Percent of those enrolled at the end of the semester. | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | |

Table 2 demonstrates that many students are mastering the subject matter well enough to achieve a grade of A. The range is from 32 to 75 percent. These results are very similar to data for prior years. When more than one section of a course is offered the combined result is used in this analysis. The unusually high percent of As for PAdm 865, State and Local Government Finance, is of some concern. The course has historically been taught by the Regents Distinguished Professor of Public Finance, but due to a vacancy in that position during academic year 2009-2010, the course was taught by an adjunct who has not been rehired.

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| **TABLE 2 2009-2010** | |  |  |  |  |  |
| **MPA Percentage of Students Receiving an A Grade 2009-2010** | | | | | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Core Course** | **Enrolled** | **Drop or Withdraw** | **A** | **Incomplete** | **% Passing with an A \*** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 702 | 30 | 5 | 13 | 0 | 52.00% |  |
| 710 | 29 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 40.74% |  |
| 725 | 29 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 32.14% |  |
| 745 | 22 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 31.82% |  |
| 765 | 34 | 8 | 11 | 0 | 42.31% |  |
| 802 | 24 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 50.00% |  |
| 865 | 26 | 2 | 18 | 0 | 75.00% |  |
| 895 | 17 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 58.82% |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \*Percent of those enrolled at the end of the semester | | | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | |

In 2009-2010 very few students overall dropped or withdrew from any of the core classes. Drops and withdrawals occurred primarily in first year, first semester courses. This means that students are serious about getting the MPA degree. It also reflects increases in admission standards that began in 2006-2007.

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| **Table 3 2009-2010** | |  |  |
| **MPA Course Screening Effect Percentage** | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Core Course** | **Enrolled** | **Drop or Withdraw** | **%** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 702 | 30 | 5 | 17% |
| 710 | 29 | 2 | 7% |
| 725 | 29 | 1 | 3% |
| 745 | 22 | 0 | 0% |
| 765 | 34 | 8 | 24% |
| 802 | 24 | 4 | 17% |
| 865 | 26 | 2 | 8% |
| 895 | 14 | 0 | 0% |
|  |  |  |  |

**Objective 2: To give students who wish to specialize, the opportunity to obtain a Graduate Certificate in selected topics.**

Assessment involves monitoring the number of students attaining each of the Graduate Certificates and providing a list of those individuals each year.

The Hugo Wall School offers four graduate certificates. The *Graduate Certificate in Public Finance* was initiated in the fall of 2001 and requires completing four graduate-level courses in public finance: public sector economics, state and local government finance, public budgeting, and public financial management. The *Graduate Certificate in Economic Development* was added in the fall 2003 and requires completion of the following graduate-level courses: planning process, urban land development, urban economics, and state and local economic development. In 2004, the *Graduate Certificate in City and County Management* was introduced and requires completion of the following courses: public management of human resources, state and local government finance, state and local government administration, and one of the following: planning process, state and local economic development, local government law or public works administration. In 2007 the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management was introduced. It requires completion of the following courses: public management of human resources, state and local government finance, and fundraising and financial management in nonprofit organizations. Students must also complete one of the following three electives: public policy analysis and program evaluation, or community networks, or alternative service delivery.

Graduate certificates are available to MPA students, students completing other graduate degrees at Wichita State University, and category A non-degree students who have completed their undergraduate degree and seek advanced study in public finance, economic development, city and county management, and nonprofit management. Completion of the graduate certificate is recognized on the student’s official university transcript.

**During the 2009-10 academic year students received the following graduate certificates:**

**The *Graduate Certificate in Public Finance* was completed by**

Cheryl Canfield

Johanna Winter

Michael Woodrum

**The *Graduate Certificate in Economic Development* was completed by**

No students

**The *Graduate Certificate in City and County Management* was completed by**

Michael Jacobs

Anne Jacobson

Lori Marceau

Michael Schrage

Troy Tillotson

Michael Woodrum

**The *Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management* was completed by**

Cheryl Canfield

Angee Fanning

Lori Marceau

Kimberly Moralez

Samuel Ofei-Dodoo

Graduate certificates are increasingly popular with students (see Table 4). Since 2002 31 students have received certificates in public finance, 5 in economic development, and 16 in city and county management. In 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 no students completed the Graduate Certificate in Economic Development. The faculty will re-evaluate this certificate during academic year 20010-11 in light of the the recent departure of Professor Wong who taught two of the four required classes for that certificate.

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| **Table 4 2009-2010** | |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Graduate Certificates Awarded\*, Calendar Years 2002-2010** | | | | |  |  |
|  | | | | |  |  |
| **Calendar Year** | **Public Finance** | **Economic Development** | **City and County Management** | **Nonprofit Management** | **Cumulative Total** |  |
| 2002 | 3 |  |  |  | 3 |  |
| 2003 | 7 |  |  |  | 7 |  |
| 2004 | 4 | 1 |  |  | 5 |  |
| 2005 | 5 | 2 | 1 |  | 8 |  |
| 2006 | 4 | 1 | 3 |  | 8 |  |
| 2007 | 3 | 1 | 6 |  | 10 |  |
| 2008 | 5 |  | 6 | 5 | 16 |  |
| 2009 | 4 |  | 5 | 3 | 12 |  |
| 2010 | 3 |  | 6 | 5 | 14 |  |
| **Total** | **38** | **5** | **27** | **13** | **83** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **\*NOTE: Certificates were initiated as follows;** | | | |  |  |  |
| Public Finance in 2001; | | |  |  |  |  |
| Economic Development in 2003; | | |  |  |  |  |
| City and County Management in 2005; and | | | |  |  |  |
| Nonprofit Management in 2008. | | |  |  |  |  |

Objective 3: To prepare students for interviews with employers.

Assessment involves monitoring the number of students participating in mock interviews.

Employers hold interviews to assess candidates for their positions (internships and regular jobs). MPA faculty help students prepare for interviews by conducting mock interviews followed by a feedback session. During the 2009-2010 academic year mock interviews were held on two different days. Each of these events involved the interview itself and a detailed feedback session with each student. This option is available for every MPA student and 4 mock interviews were conducted.

**Objective 4: To place students in appropriate internships within local, state, and federal governments.**

Assessment of this objective focuses on monitoring the number of students placed in internships.

Acceptance of interns reflects employer satisfaction with the knowledge and skills of MPA students. During the academic year 2009-2010 the MPA program had 3 interns working with local and state governments – two with the City of Wichita and one with Sedgwick County.

**Objective 5: To assist students in finding professional positions in state and local government.**

Assessment of this objective focuses on monitoring the number of graduates finding jobs within twelve months of graduation, and providing specific examples of student accomplishments in this respect. Fifteen students were awarded the Master of Public Administration degree in winter and spring graduation ceremonies this past year. They are listed by name in Table 5 and their current placements are as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 5 2009-2010** |  |  |  |
| **MPA Graduates Employment Status of 2009-10 Graduates** | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **MPA Graduate** | **Position** | **Employer** | **State** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Corrine Bannon | Management Fellow | City of Wichita | KS |
| Cheryl Canfield | Head of Reference | Hutchinson Public Library | KS |
| Melissa Fleeker | Caseworker | Social & Rehabilitation Services | KS |
| Bradley Gamber | Transportation Coordinator | Sedgwick County, Department on Aging | KS |
| Anne Jacobsen | Management Intern | Sedgwick County | KS |
| Brent Lundmark | Public Works | City of Hutchinson | KS |
| Lori Marceau | Police Lieutenant | City of Wichita, PD | KS |
| Samuel Ofei-Dodoo | PhD student | Ph.D. program |  |
| Clifford Paxson | In transition | na | KS |
| Brandon Russell | Assistant Director - EMS | Butler County | KS |
| Michael Schrage | Deputy City Manager | City of Salina | KS |
| Michelle Tennyson | Police Officer | City of Wichita PD | KS |
| Troy Tillotson | Budget Analyst | City of Wichita | KS |
| Johanna Winter | Economic Development Specialist | Girard Chamber of Commerce | KS |
| Michael Woodrum | In transition | Private sector | KS |

Only two of these students are listed as “in transition.” One of them, Michael Woodrum, is a traditional student seeking professional employment in southeast Kansas. The other, Clifford Paxson, is a retired fire chief who is taking a year off as he decides whether to further his professional education by enrolling in either a doctoral program or a law school.

**History of Hugo Wall School Faculty Involvement in Program Revision**

The Master of Public Administration program has a long history of program revision and all faculty members have been engaged in that effort. For instance in 1996 the faculty met several times to revise the curriculum. These changes took effect in the fall of 1997 and involved changing some courses required in the core, replacing a required completion paper with a set of courses that provide analytic and intensive writing experiences, and renumbering courses.

In 1999 we did a needs assessment focusing on city and county managers in south central Kansas. In 2000 we held an off campus retreat and made decisions to develop a training program called the MiniMPA, a certificate in public finance, a certificate in public management, a track within the program focusing on nonprofit management, and to market the MPA program more actively. The Graduate Certificate in Public Finance was approved in 2001.

In the spring of 2001 we surveyed alumni to assess the MPA program. We found that 98.2 percent of alumni were either very satisfied or satisfied with the program. Similarly, 91.9 percent said they would recommend the program to others.

In 2004 the faculty met and developed a Graduate Certificate in Economic Development. The motivation for this effort was the fact that there are about 80 professional level positions in the State of Kansas that employee people with these skills.

In 2005 the faculty met and developed a Graduate Certificate in City and County Management. The motivation for this effort was the fact that more than half our graduates become employed by cities and counties. This also responds to the nation-wide trend to professionalize county government. Also, in 2005 the faculty met to address concerns about an unusually large number of applications, admissions and nonenrollments. Faculty also perceived that many of the students who did enroll were poorly prepared for graduate education. To collect appropriate data, students who did not enroll or became inactive were contacted to determine why they made these decisions. In addition, an analysis of student admissions was done so that we would know how students admitted to the program measured up. This topic was discussed at six different faculty meetings before a decision was made to increase admission standards. Results of the survey and analysis were included in the 2008-2009 Assessment Report.

Changes in admission standards included: raising the grade point average required for admission from 2.75 to 3.0, requiring all applicants to submit a letter describing there work experience, career interests and how the MPA degree fits into their career plans, and 2 letters of recommendation. On a case by case basis, the faculty will consider admitting students with GPA’s above 2.75 but below the 3.0 requirement for professionals with significant government work experience. Admission will be based on evidence that the applicant has matured since completing their undergraduate work and that they are ready for graduate education at this point in their life. Particular attention will be paid to their letter, and to their letters of recommendation.

In making the decision to revise admission standards the faculty examined the performance of applicants over the last 10 years who were Category B admissions when they started the program. That list includes the names of a significant number of distinguished public leaders.

In 2006-2007 the number of students admitted to the program declined somewhat (See Table 6). Whether this was due to the higher admission standards or not is unknown. We do know that the percentage of students admitted who actually show up and enroll in classes has increased. We also know that it takes the average student longer to complete the admission process than in the past. This is the result of having to submit a personal letter of interest and letters of recommendation. It appears that for some students, especially those who completed their undergraduate education several years ago, finding faculty who remember them or who have not moved/retired may be problematic. In lieu of letters from former professors we are accepting letters from employers.

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| **Table 6 2009-2010** | |  |  |
| **Admission to the MPA Program** | | |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Year** | **Admitted** | **Enrolled** | **Percent** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 2003 | 31 | - | - |
| 2004 | 47 | - | - |
| 2005 | 72 | 45 | 62.50% |
| 2006 | 40 | 19 | 47.50% |
| 2007 | 29 | 20 | 68.97% |
| 2008 | 33 | 20 | 60.61% |
| 2009 | 38 | 33 | 86.84% |
| 2010 | 33 | 29 | 87.88% |
|  |  |  |  |

In 2006 the faculty met and developed a recruitment plan. We identified feeder colleges/universities with the state of Kansas based on size and their offering of majors such as political science. These schools are Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Pittsburg State University, and Washburn University. Starting that year we have made recruitment visits to each school every spring. For the state schools these visits have produced more than 1 student per school per year each. Washburn has sent us a student less frequently. This may be due to the fact that Washburn is the smallest of these four universities.

In 2006-2007 following several years of discussion and assessment by an external consultant, planning with respect to nonprofit management came to fruition. In the fall semester Dr. Melissa Walker, who was recruited for her expertise in nonprofit management and finance, joined the Hugo Wall School faculty. The faculty subsequently undertook a major review of the Master of Public Administration degree to assess how nonprofit management should be incorporated into the curriculum. This review resulted in revisions of the School’s mission statement and core courses, the addition of three new courses, and submission of a proposal for the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management. The new certificate was approved during the Spring Semester 2007 and went into effect during academic year 2007-08. These changes have broaden the instructional offerings of the School for students seeking careers in the nonprofit sector and responded to the growing trend of public service delivery by nonprofit agencies. The design of the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management required the creation of the following three new courses:

Public Administration 870: Fund-raising and Financial Management in Nonprofit Organizations, Public Administration 871: Community Networks, and

Public Administration 872: Alternative Service Delivery.

During academic year 2010-2011 the faculty will evaluate the Graduate Certificate in Economic Development in light of declining enrollment and resignation of key faculty. They will also revise the assessment plan.