Packet for 2012 Program Review

Master's Program in Public Policy and Administration (PPA)

Department of Public Policy and Administration

California State University, Sacramento

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(Draft for Internal and External Reviewers)

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A. Pre-Self-Study Information Packet

a. Previous PPA Program Self Study (Summer 2005)
Word File: 2005PPASelfStudy

b. Previous PPA Program Internal Review Report (Fall 2005)
Word File: 2005PPAIntRev
Word File: 2005PPAIntRevResp

c. Previous PPA Program External Review Report (Fall 2005)
Word File: 2005PPAExtRev

d. Institutional Research PPA Department Fact Book (Fall 2006 – Spring 2001)
Web File: http://www.csus.edu/oir/Data%20Center/Department%20Fact%20Book/PPA2011.pdf

B. Self-Study Proposal

Department of Public Policy and Administration (PPA)
2012 Self-Study Proposal for Master's Program in PPA
Rob Wassmer, Chairperson and Professor
November 28, 2011

Background

The Department of Public Policy and Administration at Sacramento State will use Pilot Study

Option C (Focused Inquiry) to conduct the scheduled 2012 Program Review of its Master's

Program in Public Policy and Administration in the spring semester of 2012. The remainder of

this document provides our proposal on how we plan to satisfy the three required elements of

this option.

Required Element One

Provide general information about the program, e.g., data on students, faculty, staff, facilities, etc.

We will accomplish this first required element through reporting standardized data provided by

Sacramento State's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and our department's own data

collected and maintained in ACCESS by our Administrative Assistant Suzi Byrd. We will also

offer a comparison of data on faculty, staff, and facilities between that reported in our last PPA

Program Review in 2005 and that which exists in spring 2012. A purpose of this comparison will

be to show how our resources have drastically shrunk in the last seven years, while the number

of students attending and graduating from our program has been consistent or even grown.

Ms. Byrd has already begun the process of taking the OIR data in hard copy form, and

transferring it to spreadsheet form. These spreadsheets will make it easy to place the existing

OIR data, and any desired manipulations of it, in WORD table form for our final report. While

Ms. Byrd is doing this, she is checking for any discrepancies between the OIR data and what we

have collected for our department. If any discrepancies found, she will contact OIR to resolve.

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We will also supplement the standard OIR data with department specific data on PPA students' progress to graduation throughout their time in our master's program and graduation rates.

Required Element Two

Provide a statement of intended student learning outcomes at the program level: methods of assessing them, including the use of direct measures; assessment results to date; and documentation of the use of assessment results in efforts to achieve program improvement.

The appendix that follows this proposal contains a Table 1 which describes our current PPA learning objective matrix that contains five general core objectives, and multiple specific objectives mapped as primary (P) or secondary (S) to the nine core courses in our master's program. This will be included in our final report as the baseline from which we began the focused inquiry described next under required element three.

As required for this second element, our final report will also describe the two current methods by which we assess our achievement of the learning goals described in Table 1 in this document's Appendix. These include surveys of students regarding how well the mapped primary objective learning goals are achieved in each class, and faculty assessment of student written, pre- and post PPA-coursework memos, on a public policy and/administration topic). In our final report, we will also document the results of these assessment tools for the past five years (going back to academic year 2006-07) and trace our progress to better achieving these learning goals.

Though we have looked at our assessment results in each of the last five years in our annual spring PPA Department Retreat, and made changes in our pedagogy and curriculum based upon these results, we have not made a concerted effort to trace these results over the entire previous five-year period. This just described effort will offer valuable input into the focused inquiry that is the third required element described next.

Required Element Three

Provide the results of focused inquiry addressing issues of particular interest/concern to the program itself, in the context of what is currently important to the college and university.

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The PPA Department's general and specific learning objectives, described in the Appendix's Table 1, have been in place for over five academic years. In our proposed investigation we desire to first inquire as to whether the five general learning objectives in this table (Critical Thinking, Integrative Thinking, Effective Communication for Policy Audiences, Understanding Professional Role, and Practical Applications) still make the most sense. Following this, we want to ask if the specific learning objectives that map to each of these five general learning objectives (or a new group of them) capture the essential elements desired for our chosen general learning objectives. We also wish to inquire as to whether certain specific learning objectives should carry greater weight than the others. Once done, and based upon on how it turns out, we will reformulate the mapping of our newly chosen specific learning objectives back to specific PPA core courses. The goal in doing this is to insure that each of these specific learning objectives are a primary area of coverage in at **least** two PPA courses, and a secondary area of coverage in at **least** three PPA core courses. (These minimums could be greater for learning objectives deemed to carry greater weight.) If these minimums do not occur through the current way PPA core course taught, we will suggest ways that our overall curriculum and/or specific courses could change to achieve these objectives.

We will accomplish the just described goals of our focused inquiry using four sources of input. Two of these sources, already available, are the annual assessments of course specific learning goals we have accomplished over the last five years and an OIR alumni survey accomplished last summer. The two additional sources of information, gathered in the spring of 2012, will come from a focus group of alumni, and a second focus group of actual/potential employers of our Public Policy and Administration Program's graduates. We also plan on involving current PPA Master's Students in the entire process through at least four of them (already recruited) in the meetings and deliberations on the subject planned for spring semester 2012.

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Closely looking over our previous annual assessment reports, and tracking data on how the achievement of learning objectives has changed over time, offers necessary information on the achievement of existing learning objectives within our existing curriculum. The already completed alumni survey contains responses to how alumni feel regarding our existing general learning objectives and (1) "how often you use a specific skill (learning objective) in your day-to-day professional activities," and (2) "extent to which your completion of the PPA Master's Program enhanced a specific skill (learning objective)." These two sources of existing information offer valuable input on the areas of further inquiry and clarification needed. We will then investigate these areas in a series of focus group inquiries to both alumni and current/potential employers of our graduates.

The ultimate goal of our focused inquiry is a checkup and potential revision of the PPA Learning Objective Matrix. This is an important and relevant goal for program review because it fully matches with both the WASC and Sacramento State objectives of clearly and appropriately stating what the learning objectives of an academic program are, implementing a method by which to assess whether these objectives are being achieved, and if not, suggesting changes in pedagogical practices and/or curriculum within the program to better achieve them.

C. Self Study

General Information about the PPA Program

Quality of Curriculum, Instructional Personnel, and Curriculum Delivery

The Master's Program in Public Policy and Administration (PPA) at California State University, Sacramento is an exciting professional degree opportunity for students interested in a public service career. The program draws together the diverse perspectives, technologies, and skills now essential to a successful career in public management, or in one of the many fields within the public policy arena. Unlike programs with a more limited focus, the PPA provides the skills necessary for management and budgeting, as well as analytical tools helpful for understanding the economic implications of policy choices, evaluating policy options, developing political strategies for advancing proposals, and conducting/assessing research projects. Additionally, we infuse the consideration of ethics and the public good throughout the curriculum.

Contemporary Curriculum

The design of the PPA's curriculum is purposefully interdisciplinary, drawing upon the theoretical and applied knowledge of political science, economics, public administration, and applied statistics. We designed the PPA curriculum to be consistent with the rigorous standards of the National Association of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPPA at http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp). NASPPA's Universal Required Competencies include: (1) to lead and manage in public governance, (2) to participate in and contribute to the policy process, (3) to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions, (4) to articulate and apply a public service perspective, and (5) to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry. We have designed a curriculum to achieve these five required contemporary competencies through an extensive curricular mapping that begins with our own core learning objectives that parallel

these five, and then map to coverage in specific learning objections in the nine required core courses for the PPA.

NASPPA also specifies that a contemporary curriculum in master's level public policy and administration should adopt Mission-Specific Required and Elective Competencies. We have achieved our mission-specific required competencies through a focus on policy and administration issues that are specifically relevant to California State and local levels of government. Our proximity to the main operations of California state government, and the diversity of local governments in the major metropolitan area we operate in, serve to facilitate these mission-specific required competencies.

Our mission-specific elective competencies are in urban land development, collaborative governance, and judicial administration (through the College of Continuing Education). Every academic year, we offer at least two-master's level courses in each of these areas so that students can use them to fulfill their two required elective courses for the PPA. Our choice of elective areas is highly relevant to our Sacramento location given that urban land development has been a major driver of the Region's economy; California's most pressing public policy and administration challenges can often be better dealt with through a collaborative approach; and the judicial branch of California government is projected to face a major dearth of well trained professionals to administer its rising caseload.

Finally, NASPPA suggests that a contemporary master's program in public and administration must develop Professional Competencies to ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors. Our location in California's capital offers significant professional advantage to students in the PPA, providing them with a ready laboratory to gain experience alongside existing practitioners in the seat of the largest subnational government in the world. Our associations with the Center for California Studies, Center for Collaborative Policy, and Institute for Higher Education Leadership

and Policy (IHELP), all affiliated with Sacramento State, offer further opportunities for PPA faculty and students to interact with practitioners important to the formation of public policy and administration in California.

Curriculum Rigor

The requirements we place upon entering students before they can even begin classes provides one piece of evidence in support of the "rigor" of Sacramento State's PPA curriculum. These include a minimum of a "B" undergraduate GPA (though our entering average GPA is above a B+); the completion of the GRE General Test for which there are no required cutoff scores, but for which we maintain an expectation that they be in the upper-half of the nationwide score distribution; and completed undergraduate courses in American government, statistics, and microeconomics with a "B" or better grade before students can begin the program (no exceptions). We do this based on the experience of knowing that students need this high level of previous achievement to succeed. Furthermore, this rigor flows through the high standards we set for writing in every course in the program and in a final required thesis.

Faculty Qualifications

The qualifications of the full-time PPA faculty who teach in the program match the depth and breadth necessary to teach the interdisciplinary curriculum just described. All faculty members regularly teaching our core courses have achieved a doctorate in an appropriate field, including a doctorate in political science (Professor Lascher), doctorate in economics (Professor Wassmer), doctorate in public administration (Professor Kirlin), and doctorate in education policy (Professor Jez). Interim Provost Gossett (a political science doctorate) has also taught a core course for us.

Being in a master's only department, we also maintain higher publication expectations for RTP than is standard at most departments in the California State University, Sacramento. (As listed at www.csus.edu/ppa/artp/artp_procedures.pdf , scholarly and creative activity carries a 30 percent weight in all RTP decisions in the PPA Department at Sacramento State). In

addition, we enhance our professional and applied focus through the consistent use of two part-time faculty with extensive real world experiences in California land use (Instructor Detwiller) and collaborative governance (Instructor Booher) practices.

Percent of Instruction by Full-time Faculty

There are ten core courses in the PPA curriculum (PPA 200, 205, 207, 210, 220A, 220B, 230, 240A, 240B, and 500). It is our policy to only have full-time, tenured or tenure track professors teach all of these courses. We teach four electives using state funding exclusively (PPA 250, 251, 270, and 272). We deliberately offer half of these four electives using part-timers so that students learn from a practitioner in the areas of land use and collaborative governance. Thus, out of these 14 possible courses, 12 are taught by full-time faculty (or a full-time faculty instruction ratio of 86 percent).

Use of Technology as Discipline Appropriate

Where appropriate, we employ technology to help deliver our curriculum more effectively. This includes: (1) the use of SacCT to communicate to students in all classes; (2) SMART classrooms for all classes that allow the projection of PowerPoint, videos, and other media when needed; (3) the requirement that students purchase and use a laptop based statistical analysis program, and apply such statistical analysis in assignments and examinations; and a (4) first semester policy course that is taught using a hybrid distance learning format. In addition, faculty members encourage interaction among students through active discussions in electronic chat rooms, have taught classes while at a conference using SKYPE, and presented guest speakers through SKYPE.

Advising Program and Graduation Success

Since the fall of 2000, the PPA Program's Administrative Assistant (Suzi Byrd) has facilitated the creation of an ACCESS database that tracks all admitted students from starting semester to graduation. From this, we specifically know when a matriculated student graduates or become inactive. This database is available to all faculty advisors in the program and is invaluable at

tracking their progress and creating the statistics described below. At the beginning of each term, we monitor student enrollment so that we can catch students who have left the program or not correctly enrolled. Faculty and staff follow up individually with students if a concern arises in a particular student's enrollment choices.

Graduation Rate

Considering that master's students lose the currency of classes toward graduation seven years after they take them, it is reasonable to examine our graduation rates within that timeframe. Thus, anyone starting in the fall of 2004 or earlier is either done, or not likely to finish. Our graduation rate for PPA students starting in fall 2000 was 62% (13/21), fall 2001 was 61% (22/36), fall 2002 was 63% (22/35), fall 2003 was 65% (28/43), and in fall 2004 was 86% (25/29). This clearly indicates a generally rising graduation rate for those who must have finished by now. Our graduation rate for those starting in fall 2005 was 77% (23/30), fall 2006 was 68% (17/25), fall 2007 was 55% (17/31), and fall 2008 was 50% (17/34). Our graduation rate for these subsequent entering classes is a little lower, but we expect those rates to rise as all students have adequate opportunity to complete their theses.

Of additional relevance is how the PPA time-to-master-degree-completion compares to the SSIS College and university past five-year averages. Based upon the *OIR Factbook*, at 2.8 years in 2009-2010, PPA's time-to-completion is the same as the university average, and less than the 3.3 years exhibited by all master's students in SSIS.

Distribution of Advising Responsibilities among Faculty Members

The PPA Program has only three full-time faculty members teaching in the program (Jez, Kirlin, and Wassmer), with Jez having at least half-time responsibility in the EdD Program. Interim Provost Gossett, Interim SSIS Dean Lascher teach for us as time allows and both have generously agreed to advise thesis students (Lascher is taking on six this term and Gossett is currently advising one). Furthermore, IHELP Director Shulock continues to also generously mentor PPA students and advise PPA theses, when their interest falls in California higher

education. Thus advising responsibilities are divided fairly equally between Kirlin and Wassmer for program and course advising, and all of us for thesis advising.

Proactive Advising Contact with Students to Assure Progress to Degree

We begin with a mandatory group advising session for all admitted students in the summer before their fall start. Here we explicitly provide and discuss roadmaps to two or three-year completion times by taking suggested two, three, or four classes per semester. We also pair new graduate students with Professors Jez, Kirlin, or Wassmer as an initial advisor based upon likely overlapping interests. Contact with this advisor continues throughout the first year and in our gateway course PPA 200. We also check registration rolls just before a semester starts and contact students who have not enrolled, or have an enrolled at a level of courses different from the past. Prior to the thesis stage, students receive multiple messages (in classes as well as via the list serve) about the necessary steps for successful completion of the thesis. We have evolved to a model that involves students finding a thesis advisor a full semester before they expect to enroll in the culminating course, with a goal of beginning their final term with the first 2-3 chapters drafted. At the thesis stage, we require two advisors to offer greater assistance in completing the culminating experience. Furthermore, rather than simply paying the required fees to work with primary and secondary thesis advisory, our thesis course (PPA 500) meets every few weeks to track and encourage student progress in this area with their advisors.

Program Roadmap to Curriculum Completion and Graduation Success

As described above, we provide a roadmap to completing the program under part or full time status at an initial advising session. This roadmap is permanently available at http://www.csus.edu/ppa/curriculum/sequence.htm .

Use of Technology to Supplement and Strengthen Program Advising Effort

As also described above, we have instituted an ACCESS database that tracks the progress of all students. We also extensively use the university-based software to look up courses completed and grades earned by student.

Post-degree Success and Graduate Impact on Community

In the 23 years that the PPA Program has been in existence, it has graduated nearly 350

degree holders. As detailed on the PPA website (www.csus.edu/ppa/alumni), these students

are currently employed at places like (listed alphabetically):

AECOM, Bickmore Risk Services, California Association for Local Economic Development, California Budget Project, California Chiropractic Association, California Common Cause, California Community Colleges, California Community College Chancellor's Office, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, California Department of Education, California Department of Insurance, California Employees Public Retirement System, California Energy Commission, California Department of Conservation, California Department of Finance, California Department of Health Services, California Department of Industrial Relations, California Department of Social Sciences, California Employment Development Department, California EPA, Department of Pesticide Regulation, California's Little Hoover Commission, California Lieutenant Governor's Office, California Research Bureau, California State Assembly, California State Association of Counties, California State Auditor, California State Senate, California State Treasurer, California State University Chancellor's Office, California Student Aid Commission, California Taxpayers Association, California Youth Authority, City of Sacramento Police Department, , Economic and Planning Systems, Inc., El Dorado County Local Agency Formation Commission, El Dorado County Chief Administrative Office, Institute for Higher Education Policy and Leadership, Legislative Analyst's Office for the State of California, Medical Board of California, Napa County Executive Office, Office of Congresswoman Doris Matsui California, Sacramento City College, Sacramento County Department of Probation, Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Senate Office of Research, Solano County Sheriff's Department, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and United States Department of State.

Some of our most well-known graduates include Christopher Cabaldon (Mayor, West

Sacramento), Jim Mayer (Executive Director, California Forward), Kevin McCarty

(Councilperson, Sacramento), and Karen Y. Zamarripa (Assistant Vice Chancellor, California

State University).

Strength of Teaching Performance

The PPA Program is dedicated to providing an enriching and stimulating learning environment

to all enrolled master's students. We achieve this through a shared commitment to a rigorous

and stimulating pedagogical environment we reinforce with retention-tenure-promotion (RTP)

and post-tenure review policies that are described in the department's RTP Policies and

Procedures (http://www.csus.edu/ppa/artp/artp_procedures.pdf) and summarized below.

These are quotes taken directly from our RTP document and demonstrate our commitment in these areas:

- o *Student evaluations of teaching constitute a primary gauge of teaching in the classroom. By departmental policy, student evaluations of teaching are conducted at the end of the semester for every course offered by the department, thus providing a rich source of data.*

- o *When an instructor is under consideration for tenure, promotion, or periodic review a member or members of the department faculty shall conduct at least one in-class evaluation of her or his teaching effectiveness (different members of the faculty may be involved if multiple in-class evaluations are conducted).*

- o *The RTP and Post-Tenure Review Committees are urged to use classroom visits not only as an opportunity to evaluate a faculty member under review, but as an opportunity to gain information about pedagogy that may be helpful for the department as a whole. For example, a classroom visitor may observe that the faculty member being reviewed uses a particularly effective method for encouraging classroom discussion. This method could then be shared with colleagues at a subsequent departmental meeting.*

- o *The [part-time] faculty member under review and faculty member conducting the evaluation will arrange a mutually agreeable and appropriate time for the in-class visit. Surprise visits will not be used. …The faculty member conducting the in-class evaluation shall provide a written report to the Part-Time Faculty Evaluation Committee members and the part-time faculty member being reviewed.*

A summary of our department wide teaching evaluations for spring 2012 through spring 2006 is below.

Semester	Overall Average Rating All Categories (1-5 max possible)	Overall Average Rating Instruction (1-5 max possible)
Spring 2011	4.21	4.18
Fall 2010	4.36	4.35
Spring 2010	4.27	4.06
Fall 2009	4.47	4.52
Spring 2009	4.11	4.10
Fall 2008	4.28	4.25
Spring 2008	4.36	4.41
Fall 2007	4.52	4.65
Spring 2007	4.36	4.44
Fall 2006	4.32	4.28
Spring 2006	4.53	4.63

Quality of Program and Resource Utilization

The PPA Program has six faculty members who have tenured or tenure-track appointments in the PPA Department. But the reality is that once the other assignments of these faculty are considered, we have around two full time-time faculty by which to deliver the program's curriculum. The reason is that one of the six (Shulock) is the full-time Director of IHELP and no longer teaches regularly for us. One is the Interim Provost (Gossett) who will only teach one course for us every other year when this assignment is over. Another is the Interim College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies Dean (Lascher) and teaches one course a year for PPA. Still another (Jez) is the Assistant Director of the EdD Program at Sacramento State and only teaches one or two courses for in the PPA in an academic year. Wassmer is the Chairperson of PPA, and with half-time course relief for this, teaches three PPA courses a year. Kirlin is the only PPA faculty member with her full-time load dedicated to teaching in the PPA Program. **As noted on p. 17 of the previous 2005 PPA Program Review, the number of PPA faculty members has held steady at six since 2005, but the percentage assigned to teaching in PPA of these six has declined.** A positive take away from this is that all these PPA Professors who have gone onto key administrative roles at Sacramento State can bring the expertise gained from these positions into the teaching of public administration within our master's program. Though the obvious downside is the stress it places on us in finding full-time faculty available to teach our core PPA curriculum. We hope to have this rectified through a current search for an IHELP Associate Director who will have half-time teaching responsibility in PPA in a tenure or tenure-track line, and with the eventual return of Lascher to full-time PPA Professor status.

That said, the PPA Department remains highly efficient at carrying out its mission of graduating 25 master's students a year from a rigorous and well-respected graduate program with a thesis requirement, generating a higher than CSU average amount of research

productivity, and doing their fair share of college, university, and community service. We list

examples of our achievements in these areas for the last two years next.

Scholarly and creative activity

PPA faculty are among the most prolific at Sacramento State in their research efforts. They

include two winners of the President's Award for Research and Creative Activity and one winner

of the Outstanding Scholarly Achievement Award. PPA faculty have concentrated their

research efforts in applied areas that have enhanced the quality of life in the region and state.

Examples of refereed journal articles from PPA faculty in **last two years alone** are:

- Gossett, C. & Lewis, G. (2011). "Why Did Californians Pass Proposition 8? Stability and Change in Support for Same-Sex Marriage." 2011. *California Journal of Public Policy*, 3(1).
- Gossett, C. (2011). "Lesbians and Gay Men in the Public Sector Workforce," in Norma M. Riccucci, ed*., Public Personnel Management: Current Concerns -- Future Challenges*, 5th ed.; New York: Longman, 2011.
- Offenstein, J. Shulock, N. (2011). "Political and Policy Barriers to Basic Skills Education in the California Community Colleges." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(2): 160-172.
- Jeydel, A. &, Lascher, E. (2011). "Incumbent Gender and Electoral Safety in Local Elections." *California Politics and Policy, 13* (November), 1-16.
- Lascher, E, & Korey, J. (2011). "The Myth of the Independent Voter, California Style." *California Journal of Politics and Policy 3*: (1), Article 2.
- Propheter, G. and S.J. Jez (2012). "Whither Utility and Duty? A Case Study for Virtue in Community College Administration," *Community College Review*, 40(215), 215-39.
- Jez, S.J. (2012). Analyzing the Female Advantage in College Access among African Americans. In C. Chambers (Eds.), Black American Female Undergraduates on Campus: Successes and Challenges. *Diversity in Higher Education Series*.
- Vasquez Heilig, J., Williams, A., & Jez, S.J. (2010). Inputs and Student Achievement: An Analysis of Latina/o-Serving Urban Elementary Schools. *The Journal of the Association of Mexican American Educators,* 4(1).
- Wassmer, R. and R. Fisher (2012). "Debt Burdens of California's State and Local Governments," with Ronald Fisher, *California Journal of Politics and Policy* 4, forthcoming.
- Wassmer, R. (2011). "The Recent Pervasive External Effects of Residential Home Foreclosure," *Housing Policy Debate* 21, pp. 247-265.

Service

PPA faculty, though small in number, have taken leadership roles in SSIS and university

committees, and also serve the university at high level administrative roles. They also engage

in extensive community and professional service. Examples from the last two years are:

- **Shulock:** Institute for High Education Leadership and Policy Director, Served on Community College Chancellor's Task Force on Student Success; Testimony to Little

Hoover Commission on California Community Colleges; Presented at a public hearing at the State Capitol, February 2011. Presented to Board of Governors on Student Success Task Force recommendations; Community College Student Success: Challenges and New Priorities, Presented to the California Collaborative on District Reform, March 26, 2012; Community College Student Success: Evolution of Research and Policy,Presented at the Sacramento State Doctorate in Educational Leadership Transformational Leader Series, February 17, 2012; SSTF.

- o **Lascher**: SSIS Associate Dean 2011. Acting Director Center for CA Studies. Chaired Institute for Social Research Director Search Committee, 2011-2012. Served as Provost's representative on Instructional Resources Allocation Committee and Student Fees Advisory Committee, 2009-2012. Member, Hillel at Davis and Sacramento Board of Directors, 2008-2011.

- o **Jez**: EdD Associate Director. University Graduation Initiative Steering Committee. Center for California Studies Campus Advisory Board. University Committee on Diversity Awards.

- o **Wassmer:** PPA Department Chair. Director of Master's in Science and Urban Land Development Program. Sac State Graduate Studies Policy Committee, 2008-Present. SSIS RTP Secondary Committees C, 2002-2010. "Lessons from California's Experience with Regional Land Use Planning," Presented to a Visiting Group of Shanghai Urban Planners, University of the Pacific, 2011.

- o **Kirlin:** Member, campus Strategic Planning Council, 2007-2012. Member 2007-2009 WASC campus re-accreditation teams. Member, CSU Northridge WASC external accreditation team for CPR and EER phases 2009-2011. Provost's Fellow 2009-2011. Campus Director, faculty senator, 2007-2012, American Democracy Project.

Collaboration across program lines

As already discussed, the PPA Program and it faculty have been willing collaborators with other

departments, centers, and programs across the university. A list follows:

- o College of Education: PPA is co-founder and co-governor of EdD; PPA faculty serve as associate director, core faculty members, and teach and advise in the doctorate program.

- o College of Business Administration: PPA collaborated in co-founding of MSULD degree and took it over when the CBA no longer wanted to participate.

- o Government and Economics Department: Both departments had courses included in the PPA undergraduate minor (subsequently eliminated) and PPA faculty have taught undergraduate courses.

- o Gerontology Program: Special Master's in PPA/Gerontology.

- o Center for Collaborative Policy: Certificate in Collaborative Governance.

- o College of Continuing Education: Certificate in Judicial Administration.

- o Center for CA Studies: PPA faculty members have served as academic advisors for Capital Fellows programs and taught Capital Fellows Graduate Seminars.

- o Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy: PPA faculty directs and PPA faculty serve as Faculty Research Associates.

Existing Learning Outcomes of the PPA Program

This required section of the 2012 PPA Self Study offers a description and evaluation of the learning outcome goals that have been in place in the PPA Master's Program since the fall of 2006. This section is subdivided into different parts that offer answers to a specific inquiry (in italics) about the PPA Program's existing learning outcomes in the spring of 2012.

Describe your program's learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07

The Sacramento State Master's Program in Public Policy and Administration (PPA) was an early adaptor of the use of learning outcomes as a primary assessment measure. As noted in our 2005 Self Study Program Review (offered earlier in this document), in that year we had already committed to a desired learning outcome matrix for the program achieved through a mapping back of these outcomes to the program's specific core courses. Since the 2006-07 academic year, we have continually produced annual assessment reports (publicly available at http://www.csus.edu/ppa/about/progreview) that rely upon a multi-pronged approach to measure our success at achieving these learning outcomes. This includes the production of two summative measures: (1) an evaluation of individual core course level outcomes to monitor course effectiveness and (2) an evaluation of policy memos completed by entering and finishing students to provide insight into the degree of value added by completing the entire program.

PPA faculty then discusses tabulated results at an annual late spring retreat with an eye toward curriculum or pedagogical changes to implement in the following academic year in areas where learning objectives are not fully achieved. Following these practices, we immediately observed a measurable improvement in the achievement of our learning goals. Furthermore, we continue to see further improvements each year we go through this process. The major

component of our upcoming 2012 program review is a reassessment of the appropriateness of our core-learning objectives through feedback from surveys and focus groups of potential employers and alumni.

Describe PPA learning outcomes for students completing the program

The PPA Department has established five general learning objectives for those holding its master's degree. Without prioritization, we describe these below (Roman numerals I-V) and the more specific learning objectives (numbers 1-32) that each entails. The matrix given in Table 1 in the Appendix indicates where we achieve each of these specific learning objectives in PPA core courses.

I. Critical Thinking: A "mastery" of public policy and administration must include the ability to think critically – in an objective and systematic manner – about a public policy and/or public administration challenge. This entails the more specific learning objectives of: (1) appropriate problem definition, (2) objective research design and casual inference, (3) implementation considerations, and (4) ethical implications of choices.

II. Integrative Thinking: This involves the ability to take the skills picked up in economics, political science, public management, public budgeting, and statistical analysis, and use them in an integrative and appropriate way to address public policy and/or public administration challenges. Our graduates achieve such interdisciplinary thinking through the mastery of the following specific learning objectives: (5) microeconomic concepts and analysis, (6) political environment and analysis, (7) techniques of policy analysis, (8) budgeting concepts and budgeting analysis, (9) organizational analysis and change development, and (10) statistical analysis.

III. Effective Communication for Policy Audiences: The effective practice of formulating and administering government activity in a democracy requires the highly effective communication of what, why, and how you plan to do it. Thus, we require our PPA master's graduates to be adept at the following specific learning objectives: (11) report writing, (12)

memo writing, (13) presentation of technical information, (14) oral presentation, and (15) effective written presentation.

IV. Understanding Professional Role: Ours is a professional master's program geared explicitly to those who desire to work in the public sector. Thus, a requisite learning objective must be the development of an understanding of one's role in the PPA profession. The achievement of this occurs through the specific learning objectives of: (16) role of public sector in democratic/market system, (17) role of nonprofit sector, (18) California policy context, (19) intergovernmental relations, (20) role of policy analysis, (21) role of public manager, and (22) public sector workplace and role ethics.

V. Practical Application: Holders of our professional master's degree need also comprehend some essential practical applications for dealing with public policy and administration concerns. The specific learning objectives related to this include: (23) influencing the policy process, (24) practical problem solving, (25) knowing how and where to get data, (26) use of statistical data, (27) benefit/cost analysis, (28) group collaboration skills, (29) understanding budgets, (30) performance measurement, (31) strategic planning, and (32) conflict resolution.

Describe the method(s) by which the pursuit of learning goals are monitored and measured

The PPA Master's Program bases all of its assessment efforts on a matrix of program-level learning objectives previously found in Table 1 in the Appendix. From that matrix, we have developed a series of outcomes that then map to specific objectives in a primary (P) or secondary (S) manner in the core PPA courses we teach. Table 3 in the Appendix, offers the assignment description that we use to assess the value added gained by a PPA student. The assignment aims at having students identify a contemporary administrative or policy issue and then offer alternative solutions and justifications for what they view as the "best" solution. We use a 12 criteria rubric to evaluate the memo that students write in the first and last class. Table

3 in the Appendix contains this rubric. Table 4 in the Appendix, offers the summary scores, as assigned by PPA professors reading the memo

Our annual assessment efforts in the past have included two summative measures described above. Beginning this past academic year, we added an experimental third measure that consists of an exit survey of students who have just completed their thesis. They complete a web-based questionnaire using "Survey Monkey" that is designed to assess their feelings of mastery over specific learning objectives (listed in Table 2 in the Appendix) as they leave the program. The results of this survey are interesting because they occur after some distance from when survey responders completed the courses meant to fulfill the learning objectives. Though the survey remains experimental and the sample size small (16 graduating students), we find the initial results provocative. Table 5, in the Appendix, contains the average score on each question (with 5 being the highest) for the 16 graduating PPA students that took this exit survey in either fall 2010 or spring 2011.

Last spring, like every spring for the past five academic years, we held a daylong department retreat to review the assessment data, draw lessons from the information, and suggest specific curricular adjustments as deemed necessary. To do this, we examine the average scores received in all of the assessment instruments described above and look for both relatively low values and values that exhibit a greater variation around the averages. As a faculty, we then discuss the possible pedagogical and curricular reasons that this may have occurred. In a collaborative manner, we then offer suggestions as to what to change to try to raise the assessed scores in these lower performing areas.

Provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized

For the student survey results by course in Table 2 in the Appendix, we believe that average scores on a specific learning objective near 3.8 or less offers an indication of a learning objective that deserves increased attention on our part. We list these items next by course and the average score received:

- PPA 200: Understand the major research and/or professional conventions, practices and methods of inquiry of discipline (3.38). Understand the major formats, genres, and styles of writing used in discipline (3.52).

- PPA 240A: Gain experience with graduate level literature reviews (3.57).

- PPA 220B: Develop basic proficiency using quantitative spreadsheet models to inform policy questions (3.84).

- PPA 230: Improve written and verbal communication skills, including the presentation of budgetary information (3.86).

For the student-exit survey result in Table 5, we believe average scores on a specific learning objective near 3.6 or less offers an indication of increased attention on our part. (We set the bar here lower than the 3.8 above, because of the distance between when these objectives taught in a specific course and asked about upon graduation.) We list these items next by course and the average score received:

- Critical Thinking: Possess the ability to accumulate data and do basic descriptive statistical analysis…(3.50). Understand the appropriate use of bivariate and regression statistical techniques… (3.50).

- Integrative Thinking: Have a working knowledge of regression analysis and the value it offers to answer policy…(3.56).

- Practical Applications: Possess basic skills in budget development, analysis, and implementation and cash and debt.. (3.56).

- Familiar with active listening and HR intervention strategies…(3.00).

For the pre- and post-memo assignment results in Table 4, we concentrate on the "person-to-person" comparison of students. Person-to-person refers to a comparison of the score given to a particular student's memo when that individual entered the PPA Master's Program in comparison to the score given to the same person when he or she wrote a similar memo at the completion of her PPA core courses. Of possible concern for us are the two lowest valued added scores of 0.51 for item 6 (Is memo well written?) under effective communication, and 0.70 for item 5 (Are appropriate economic, political, policy, budget, and/or administrative concepts and analyses considered?) under integrative thinking.

After considering the results of possible concern noted above in the achievement of our

learning goals, PPA Faculty generated the following list of specific changes to pursue next year.

- o The specific concerns raised by students in PPA 200 were likely due to the transition of this course into one that now qualifies for "Graduate Writing Intensive" credit. The course objectives that received the lower scores were added as part of this transition. The instructor plans to pay greater attention to helping the students understand the major research and/or professional conventions, practices and methods of inquiry of PPA discipline, and the major formats, genres, and styles of writing used in PPA.

- o The literature review concerns raised in PPA 240A were likely due to the way of teaching on how to write a literature review in this class not being fully integrated with the way it is also taught in PPA 207. Although this is due in part to a faculty transition instructors of both courses have agreed upon working harder at this integration in the upcoming academic year.

- o The instructor of 220B felt the concern over spreadsheets is likely the result of some students' weakness in the basics of Excel at the start of the class. He plans to to spend more time on reviewing these basics next year.

- o The instructor of PPA 230 acknowledged the concern over using verbal and written skills in presenting budgetary information in PPA 230. She plans to rethink some of her assignments to try and specifically address these concerns.

- o Regarding the low scores registered in the student exit survey, we note that they arose in relation to highly specific skills (statistical analyses, budget analyses, and HR intervention strategies) taught in specific courses. These skills may be less likely to be retained by students not using these skills after they leave the class. The faculty are considering whether a broader measure of knowledge and skills is more appropriate for an exit survey.

- o The relatively low value added of 0.51 calculated for whether a memo is "well written" is very likely due to the average value of 1.84 assigned to students in this category at the first memo. This is by far the highest average starting point, and thus perhaps it is not surprising that it grows the least. We specifically screen our admitted students for their strong writing ability, and this statistic likely reflects this result.

- o We are a bit concerned that students score relatively low on the use of appropriate economic, policy, politics, budget, and/or administrative concepts in the value added calculated for their memos. However, a key point is that there is still a valued added of 0.70. We flagged this because it was the second lowest value added. Instructors in PPA 200, PPA 210, PPA 220A, and PPA 240 have noted this potential weakness where these conceptual distinctions are taught. They have agreed to try harder to draw such distinctions in their next year's teaching of these concepts.

To see if we have achieved the desired outcomes, we will administer the two assessment

instruments next academic year that we have used for multiple years and check whether there

was any change in the specific issues raised above. We are very likely to change the exit

survey of graduating PPA students to better assess broader learning objectives than just the class specific ones previously asked.

Has the program systematically sought data from alumni?

Yes, this past summer, in preparation for our 2012 program review, the Sacramento State Office of Institutional Research conducted a survey of our alumni for just this purpose. In this survey, we first desired to inquire as to whether the five general learning objectives in this table (Critical Thinking, Integrative Thinking, Effective Communication for Policy Audiences, Understanding Professional Role, and Practical Applications) still make the most sense. Following this, we wanted to ask if the specific learning objectives that map to each of these five general learning objectives (or a new group of them) capture the essential elements desired for our chosen general learning objectives. We also wished to inquire as to whether certain specific learning objectives should carry greater weight than the others. The results of this survey are in Table 5 in the Appendix.

Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

The National Association of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPPA at

http://www.naspaa.org) is the appropriate accrediting organization for master's programs in public policy and/or administration.   Accreditation is not mandatory in the sense that students can obtain employment in the area of public policy or public administration without having completed a program from an accredited institution; many of the most well regarded programs in the country (and in California specifically) are not accredited. For nearly a decade, we have maintained a non-accredited affiliation with NASPPA. We remain non-accredited due to the lack of resources to undergo the initial expense of achieving accreditation, and then the additional annual expense of maintaining this accreditation. As an alternate, we have paid close attention to the standards that NASPPA set for accreditation in setting our own learning goals

and assessment strategies. These standards are described below (as given at

http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp):

- o Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains: to lead and manage in public governance; to participate in and contribute to the 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.

- o Mission-specific Required Competencies: The program will identify core competencies in other domains that are necessary and appropriate to implement its mission.

- o Mission-specific Elective Competencies: The program will define its objectives and competencies for optional concentrations and specializations.

- o Professional Competencies: The program will ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.

Understanding this, we believe the PPA Master's Program has not suffered due to its

non-accreditation status. We will continue to use NASPPA accreditation standards to guide our

own setting of learning goals and assessment practices to evaluate them. If future resources

make it possible to pursue and maintain NASPPA accreditation, we are very likely to seek it.

Additional information regarding the program's desired learning outcomes and assessment

The PPA Program Review's Focused Inquiry described next uses four sources of input to

examine our already established learning goals. Two of these sources, already available, are

the annual assessments of course specific learning goals we have accomplished over the last

five years and an OIR alumni survey accomplished last summer. The two additional sources of

information, gathered in the spring of 2012, will come from a focus group of alumni and of

actual/potential employers of our Public Policy and Administration Program's graduates. We

also plan to involve current PPA Master's Students in the entire process through at least three

of them participating in the meetings and deliberations on the subject planned for spring

semester 2012.

Closely looking over our previous annual assessment reports, and tracking data on how the achievement of learning objectives has changed over time, offers necessary information on the achievement of existing learning objectives within our existing curriculum. The already completed alumni survey contains responses to how alumni feel regarding our existing general learning objectives and (1) "how often you use a specific skill (learning objective) in your day-to-day professional activities," and (2) "extent to which your completion of the PPA Master's Program enhanced a specific skill (learning objective)." These two sources of existing information offer valuable input on the areas of further inquiry and clarification needed. We will then investigate these areas in a series of focus group inquiries to both alumni and current/potential employers of our graduates.

The ultimate goal of our focused inquiry is a checkup and potential revision of the PPA Learning Objective Matrix. This is an important and relevant goal for program review. It fully matches with both the WASC and Sacramento State objectives of clearly and appropriately stating what the learning objectives of an academic program are, implementing a method by which to assess whether these objectives are being achieved, and if not, suggesting changes in pedagogical practices and/or curriculum within the program to better achieve them.

Results of Focused Inquiry

As described in the 2012 Self-Study Proposal for the Master's Program in PPA (Required

Element Three), the focused inquiry of our Program Review has three elements: (1) an

investigation of whether the categories of the general learning objectives being used (Critical

Thinking, Integrative Thinking, Effective Communication for Policy Audiences, Understanding

Professional Role, and Practical Applications) still make the most sense, (2) whether the

specific learning objectives under each of the chosen general ones are appropriate, and (3) a

revised mapping of the specific learning objectives to PPA core courses. Once this was

completed, the results were put before a focus group that consisted of potential employers of

PPA graduates. About half of these potential employers were PPA alumni, while the other half

were not. This final section of the 2012 PPA Self Study contains three more sections that

describe the results of the three elements of our focused inquiry and of the focus group used to

assess them.

An investigation of the previous categories of PPA general and specific learning objectives

Recall that the five general learning objectives used by PPA through spring 2012 include:

Critical Thinking, Integrative Thinking, Effective Communication, Understanding Professional

Role, and Practical Applications. To begin our investigation of these, we first asked the

Sacramento State Office of Institutional Research to survey PPA Alumni in the summer of 2011

on the extent that the completion of a Master's in Public Policy and Administration at

Sacramento State enhanced their abilities in each of the five general learning objective areas.

A total of 43 PPA Alumni (about 1/7 of all possible) responded. As shown in Table 6 in the

Appendix, the allowed answers to this question were *a great deal*, *considerably*, *moderately*, *not*

very much, and *not at all*. Combining the two upper responses, 95.1% thought their PPA

degree contributed a great deal or considerably to their critical thinking, 82.5% thought the same

about integrative thinking, 72.5% about practical application, 71.8% about professional role, and

58.2% about effective communication. Clearly this indicates that in the future greater attention

be paid to achieving our effective communication goals.

Table 7 in the Appendix offers the same Alumni Survey results for two separate

questions asked about the specific PPA learning objectives that fell under the five general PPA

learning objectives. The first question inquired as to how much the completion of the PPA

Program enhanced a specific skill. For this, the possible responses were *learned a great deal*,

learned considerably, *learned moderately*, *learned not very much*, and *learned not at all*. The

second question was about how much each specific skill was actually used in day-to-day

professional activities. The allowed responses here were *used always*, *used often*, *used*

occasionally, *used rarely,* and *never used*. One way of evaluating these results is to add the

percentages that chose the two highest categories for a specific skill learned in the PPA

Program and compare them to the sum of the two highest categories for how much actually

used in day-to-day professional life. The larger the positive (negative) difference between what

learned and what used, would indicate that too much (little) emphasis placed on specific skill set

in PPA Program.   Using this methodology, the survey results in Table 7 indicate:

- o   that too much emphasis is placed on Benefit/Cost Analysis in Program relative to how much it is used later with a differenced score of 34%,

- o   next in this category of taught over use was Techniques of Policy Analysis at 29.2%,

- o   then Research Design and Causal Inference at 26.3%,

- o   then Economic Concepts at 23.6%,

- o   then Political Environment and Analysis at 22%,

- o   then Statistical Analysis and Data Collection both at 19.4%,

- o   and then Problem Definition at 17.9%.

No other specific learning objective yielded a differenced value between what was learned in

two highest categories, and what was used in the two highest categories greater than 15%.

Alternatively, this method showed that the survey respondents thought too little was learned in

the PPA Program relative to what used in their jobs in the specific categories of Effective

Presentation at -20.5%, then Memo Writing at -14.0%, then Oral Presentations at -12.9%, then

Practical Problem Solving at -11.9%, and then Understanding Budgets at -11.5%. No other

specific learning objective yielded a differenced value between what learned in two highest

categories, and what used in two highest categories smaller than -10%. These findings yield

food-for-thought on what we may want to de-emphasize some in the formulation of future

specific learning goal (those with higher positive percentage differences) and emphasize more

(those with higher negative percentage differences).

Furthermore, Table 8 in the Appendix offers the results of the Alumni Survey question

regarding how much material learned in each of the PPA core courses has contributed to your

professional competence. The two highest categories of response were *a great deal* and

considerably. After adding these two highest responses together, we find that for this group of

alumni respondents, the highest percentage came in PPA 210 at 73.2%, then PPA 240A/B at

65.9%, then PPA 205 at 53.7%, then PPA 220A/B at 51.3%, then PPA 200 at 46.4%, then PPA

230 at 29.3%, and then PPA 207 at 39.0%. A possible use of these values is that the lower the

combined percentage of respondents who thought a PPA core course contributed *a great deal*

or *considerabl*y to their professional competency, the more likely the course is in need of greater

modification.

Finally, Table 9 in the Appendix offers the results of surveys given to students at the

completion of each PPA core course between the 2006-07 and 2010-11 academic years

regarding how they felt that the designated specific learning objective was achieved. Table 2 in

the Appendix illustrates the mechanics of these surveys in that students are asked to rate each

specific learning objective on a one (*not accomplished*) to five (*excellently*) Likert Scale. One

important issue that Table 9 indicates is the lack of consistency in these specific learning

objectives over time and hence the difficulty in creating a time-series comparison of them.

(Something we will address later.) Understanding this, the third column in Table 9 does list the

average of the averages of these scores by specific learning objectives for all PPA core

courses. The average across all these averages was 4.1, with a standard deviation of about

0.3. Thus one standard deviation from the average is 3.8. Based upon this distribution, it is

valuable to look at specific learning objectives that achieved an average over the years of less

than 3.8. This is compiled in the table below.

Course	Specific Learning Objective	Overall Average Rating
PPA 200	Understand the major research and/or professional conventions, practices, and methods of inquiry of the discipline	3.38
	Understand the major formats, genres, and styles of writing used in the discipline	3.52
	Sensitive students to the sensitivity of ethical decisions	3.69
	Sensitive students to the sensitivity of ethical decisions	3.62
PPA 205	Learn the major criticisms of social science, and how to defend or critique a study from both positivist and post-positivist perspectives	3.69
	Become aware of the politics of research, and understand how to position a study to influence policy decisions.	3.74
	Understand how to find and use archival data	3.54
PPA 207	None	
PPA 210	None	
PPA 220A	None	
PPA 220B	Learn how to analyze, from an economic perspective, how different types of government intervention (e.g. subsidies, taxation, cap-and-trade, technology forcing) can be used to correct market failures such as externalities and monopoly	3.62
PPA 230	Develop an understanding of the political context of budget development and implementation at the federal, state, local and special district levels	3.74
	Gain an understanding of budgets as tools for accountability and performance management and measurement	3.70
	Gain a better understanding of how California arrived at its current fiscal crisis and be able to offer an educated assessment of the options offered to solve it	3.73
	Improve written and verbal communication skills, including the presentation of budgetary information	3.62
	Develop some basic skills in the use of performance measures	2.89
PPA 240A	None	
PPA 240B	Understand the way performance measurements are used and misused	3.77

PPA general and specific learning objectives

At the start of the Spring 2012 Semester, a PPA Program Review Committee was formed with

all PPA full-time faculty (Professors Su Jin Jez, Mary Kirlin, Ted Lascher, Nancy Shulock, and

Rob Wassmer), emeritus faculty Cristy Jensen, part-time instructors Peter Detwiller and David

Booher, and current PPA graduate students (Ryan Roebuck, Eric Chisholm, and Kevin

Navarro). We proceeded to meet every other week throughout the semester for two hours. The

primary question put to this group as part of our PPA Program Review's Focused Inquiry was

whether we were satisfied with five general learning objectives that the department had been using since the last program review. Based in part upon the data just described and our own impressions, we decided unanimously as a group that we were not fully satisfied, and that we should set about crafting a reformulation of them. After much deliberation, we decided upon six new PPA general learning objectives:

- o *1. Synthesize, Analyze, and Offer Solutions*

- o *2. Integrate the Knowledge and Skills of Multiple Disciplines*

- o *3. Apply Knowledge and Skills in Multiple Settings*

- o *4. Recognize Your Professional Role*

- o *5. Recognize the Role of Policy and Administration in Public Governance*

- o *6. Communicate Publicly Relevant Topics to Multiple Audiences*

Note that these are not radical changes from the previously used five general learning objectives. The new general learning objectives one through four, and six correspond closely to previous used categories of general learning objectives. We felt though that these titles better represent what we intend the objectives to convey and that the new general learning objective five needed to be added.

After the PPA Program Review Committee reached consensus on these six general learning objectives, the next step was to develop the specific learning objectives under each of the six general ones. Using our knowledge of the previous specific learning objectives used in PPA, concerns raised over them in the previous data, and our own knowledge of them in use; and after much thoughtful deliberation, we developed the specific learning objectives listed next.

2012 REVISED PPA GENERAL & SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES

(1) ***Synthesize, analyze and offer solutions***
a. Construct clear definition of problems
b. Identify and evaluate reasonable alternatives to answer questions
c. Learn tools of analysis used for public policy and administration
d. Learn to apply analytical tools appropriately

(2) *Integrate the knowledge and skills of multiple disciplines*

a. Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of economics

b. Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of political science

c. Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of research methods

d. Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of organizational theory and behavior

e. Draw upon multiple disciplines to understand problems faced in public policy and administration

f. Learn how to access relevant data and literature

(3) *Apply knowledge and skills in a professional setting*

a. Know how to use different tools strategically

b. Understand the influences on policy development and decision making

c. Consider the ethical dimensions of choices in public policy and administration

d. Know how to work effectively in groups

e. Effectively review a literature to help address a problem

f. Understand the critical role of effective leadership

(4) *Recognize your professional role*

a. Understand your obligation to advance public value

b. Appreciate your own ethical responsibilities in the public arena

c. Understand the difference between analysis and advocacy

d. Understand the administrator's role as both analyst and advocate

(5) *Recognize the role of policy and administration in public governance*

a. Understand the significance of diversity in effective public governance in California

(6) *Communicate publicly relevant topics to multiple audiences*

a. Write clearly and succinctly for multiple audiences

b. Frame and present problems to different audiences to optimize understanding

c. Use an articulate and confident style of oral presentation

d. Comprehend the ethical implications regarding how a public problem is framed

e. Summarize technical theories and analyses in a way easily comprehended by multiple audiences

Revised mapping of the specific learning objectives to PPA core courses

Once the revised specific learning objectives were decided upon, the next task for the PPA

Program Review Committee was the mapping of them back to PPA core courses based upon

where they would get *Primary* (P) and *Secondary* (S) coverage. If possible, the Committee

deemed it desirable for each specific learning objective to get primary coverage in at least two

PPA core courses. The final mapping of this is given in Table 10 in the Appendix. As noted in the last column of this table, with one exception, every specific learning objective receives primary coverage in at least two core courses; and some receive coverage in three or four core courses. The final row of this table also designates the number of primary objectives to be achieved in each core course. This varies from five to nine and is important to note because the PPA Program Review Committee decided these primary learning objectives will be course specific, non-alterable by the instructor teaching the course, and hence remain constant over time so comparable measures of their achievement can be recorded.

Thus, the final task in operationalizing this semester-long focused inquiry was asking the member of the PPA Program Review Committee who had most often taught a PPA core course to come up with an initial draft of how each specific learning objective that received a "P" for a PPA core course would be designated. This was vetted with a second committee member before being shared with the whole committee for final approval.

Tables 11 – 19 in the Appendix contain the final language for how each primary learning objective for a core course will be represented on the syllabus for that course. The first column in each of these tables lists the specific learning objective by general learning objective number and specific learning objective letter. The second column contains the specific language that will appear on each course syllabus and be assessed each semester with a student survey instrument.

Results of PPA Focus Group to assess new general and specific learning objectives

On May 14, 2012, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, with the assistance of the Center for Collaborative Policy, the PPA Program Review Committee convened a group of seven actual and potential employers of PPA graduates, along with a group of eight PPA alumni who meet the same criteria. The names of the participants and their affiliation are described next.

- o Alumni: Josh Rosa, Nossaman Consulting; Eric Stern, Department of Finance; Maya Wallace, CA State Auditor; Joe Karkoski, Central Valley Regional Water Control Board, Kevin McCarty, Sacramento City Councilperson, Karen Zamarrpa, CA State University

Public Affairs; Jose Henriquez, El Dorado County LAFC; and Erike Young, University of California.

- o Non-Alumni: Terry Amsler, Institute for local Government; Pat Blacklock, Yolo County; Bill Chiat, CSAC Institute, Judy Fujii, Chief of Staff CA Assemblymember Manning; James Goldstene, and CA Air Resources Board.

The focus group evening began with a group discussion among PPA alumni centered on what the skills gained in the Program has helped you most in your career and what was missing. Also what material did you get too much of? A summary of this discussion is contained in the following excerpts:

- o Helped most:
    - o how government really works,
    - o what motivates people in bureaucracy,
    - o deconstruct public problems,
    - o organized and rigorous thinking,
    - o how to read organizations,
    - o data driven decision making,
    - o grew to love use of economic concepts,
    - o strategic planning,
    - o ability to do own independent analysis,
    - o understand how an organization works,
    - o theory applied to day-to-day workings of government,
    - o and collaborative practices.

- o Need more of:
    - o conflict resolution,
    - o public budgeting,
    - o leadership development,
    - o memos to narrow down issues,
    - o psychological motivation of political decision making,
    - o and more project management.

Following the PPA alumni discussion, potential and actual PPA employers were asked to discuss what abilities they would most value in their own work place from a PPA graduate. The following statements are an accurate representation of the discussion:

- o Analytical and critical thinking skills,
- o understand the power of data,
- o know when to think "outside the box,"
- o presentation skills of being brief and concise,
- o interpret expert analysis for policymaking,
- o work with CA's highly regulated environment,
- o negotiation skills,
- o how to ask the right questions,

- strong work ethic and high quality character,
- ethics of public service,
- precise budgeting skills,
- strategic and political agility,
- shared vision planning,
- learn to separate out value judgments,
- project management,
- collaboration skills,
- understand both equity and economics of a policy issue,
- strong writing skills,
- and a strong understand of the benefits and challenges that CA's diversity offers.

At the completion of these two discussions, all participants in the focus group received a list of the six new revised general learning objectives for PPA and the specific learning objectives that comprise them. After PPA Chairperson Wassmer offered a brief summary of these and their rationale, the floor was opened for general reaction. The broad point made then was how both alumni and potential employer representatives felt highly positive about our revised PPA learning objectives and nobody suggested particular ones that were inappropriate. After asking the specific question of "what jumps out at you regarding matching the needs you articulated with these draft learning objectives," members of the Focus Group mainly wanted to tweak the wording of our objectives or add new ones. The response to this is captured in the following statements:

- Regarding specific learning objective 4(d), change from "Understand the administrator's role as both analyst and advocate" to "Understand the administrator's role as analyst, advocate, and leader"

- Regarding specific learning objective 2(d), change from "Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of organizational theory and behavior" to "Learn the appropriate knowledge and skills of organizational theory and behavior (e.g., project management, performance metrics, etc.)"

- Add new specific learning objective 6(f), "Understand how to engage in effective dialogue."

- Add new specific learning objective 2(b) "Understand the power and consequences of government actions."

The information gained from the focus group, along with all of the previous information presented was the subject of a three-hour discussion at the annual PPA Faculty Retreat on June 22, 2012. Highlights of this discussion included:

- consideration of the need to incorporate the teaching of greater effective communication skills,

- reduce the amount of time devoted to benefit-cost analysis in 220B to free up time to address some other areas that were deemed in need of greater coverage,

- regarding the issue of alumni reporting that they learned techniques of policy analysis, economic concepts, political environment, statistical and data analysis, and problem definition well, but on average used it less in their day-to-day professional activities than how much it was taught and learned; we had an extended discussion of whether this is a concern to be dealt with (from we are trying to teach them these things so they can change the professional environment so they are used more, to we should more caterer to what is actually used in the workplace by those getting the PPA),

- we were in agreement of the need to focus more on the teaching of goals (effective presentation, memo writing, oral presentation, and understanding budgets) that were cited by alumni as not learned well enough in the PPA Program as to compared to how much they are used in the workplace,

- the need to choose and stick with language for the primary learning objectives in PPA core courses was agreed upon based on observed inconsistencies in the past, and the problems these generated in trying to evaluate the attainment of them over time,

- an extended examination of PPA 205 (Research Methods) and whether the manner it was currently being taught satisfied the desired need by PPA students (for thesis work) and PPA alumni (for professional activities) to conduct qualitative research in the form of sound surveys, case studies, and program evaluation,

- agreement that the major take away from the Focus Group is support and praise for our revised PPA Learning Objectives,

- a decision to table the specific recommendations on some minor changes to revised PPA Learning Objectives until we have the full report of both the internal and external reviewers,

- the need to revise the rubric used to evaluate PPA 200 and 500 memos to reflect new learning objects once they are finalized after internal and external review reports.

All of the material contained in this section on our focused inquiry, along with the reports of the internal and external reviewers will be used to finalize the revised PPA Learning Objectives once the internal and external reviews are completed in the fall of 2012.

D. PROGRAM REVIEW

Internal Review

External Review

E. APPENDIX

Tables 1-5
PDF File: Program Review Appendix

Tables 6-8
Excel File: PPA Alumni Survey from University

Table 9
Excel File: Results of Course Assessment by Course

Table 10
Excel File: PPA Final Learning Outcomes Matrix

Tables 11-19
Word Files: Table##PPA###CourseLearningObjectives