2010-2011 Annual Assessment Report

Department of Public Policy and Administration

California State University, Sacramento

June 28, 2011

Submitted by
Robert W. Wassmer, Chairperson

Approved by
All Full-Time PPA Faculty

As requested annually by Academic Affairs at California State University, Sacramento

(Sacramento State), this report offers a description of the Public Policy and Administration

(PPA) Department's assessment activities during the academic year 2010-2011. Our annual

assessments since 2006-2007 have used a cycle that facilitates continuous review of the PPA

Program and the maintenance of steady progress toward achieving our identified learning

outcomes. In this report, we provide a brief background on the PPA approach to assessment,

updated assessment measures we have gathered for the past academic year, a summary of

conclusions drawn from them by faculty at our annual retreat, and a strategy for using our

assessment findings in the upcoming year. As a matter of transparency, we post this report on

the PPA Website for public viewing. Regarding the options offered by Academic Affairs for

submission of assessment reports, we will follow Option 1 and answer the specific questions required of this option.

Background

The Department of Public Policy and Administration uses a multi-pronged approach to the assessment of our Master's Program toward achieving its learning goals. We base all of our assessment efforts on a matrix of program-level learning objectives (**see Table 1 in the Appendix**). From that matrix, we have developed a series of outcomes that then map to specific objectives in all the core PPA courses we teach (**see Table 2 in the Appendix**). Each course is responsible for covering one or more objectives, some in a primary role, others in a secondary role (as noted by a "P" or "S" in the matrix in Table 1).

Table 3 in the Appendix offers the assignment description that we use to assess the value added gained by a PPA student in the form of identifying a contemporary administrative or policy issue and the offering alternative solutions and justifications for what they view as the "best" solution. The 12 criteria rubric that we use to evaluate the memo that students write in the first and last class they take as a PPA student is also contained in Table 3. **Table 4 in the Appendix** offers the summary scores, as assigned by PPA professors reading the memo, for the criteria described in Table 3.

Our annual assessment efforts in the past has included two summative measures: (1) an evaluation of individual course level outcomes to monitor course effectiveness and (2) an evaluation of policy memos completed by entering and finishing students to provide insight into value added by completing the entire program. Beginning this 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 survey at "Survey Monkey" that is designed to assess

their final opinion of how they feel they have mastered specific learning objectives (that are listed in Table 2 in the Appendix) as they leave with all PPA courses and a Master's thesis complete. 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 asked about. Though experimental at this point, and likely to be altered in the questions it contains, we find it interesting in part because it allows to determine (all be it for relatively small sample of 16 graduating students) how students' opinions of their mastery of course learning objectives change as they get farther distance from the courses. **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. Realize that graduating students had earlier self assessed their mastery of these learning objectives after each class.

On May 25, 2011, we held a daylong department retreat to review this data, draw lessons from it, and suggest specific curricular adjustments as deemed necessary from the data and our collaborative discussion of it. Given this background on the PPA assessment process, and the new data gathered for 2010-2011, the remainder of this report answers the questions posed by Academic Affairs under Option 1 of how to complete a department assessment report.

What learning objectives did your Department assess in the AY ending June 30, 2011?

As shown in Table 1, PPA learning objectives fall under five broad categories (critical thinking, integrative thinking, effective communication, understanding professional role, and practical application). There are multiple other specific categories encompassed by these five. In our three tools of assessment, these are operationalized through specific course learning objectives (listed under each course in Table 2), outcomes looked for in briefing memos (given in the

assessment rubric in Table 3), and a repeat of course learning objectives asked of students in an exit survey (see Table 5).

How did you assess these learning outcomes?

We assessed our attainment of these learning objectives in two general ways: (1) through the collection of students' opinions on their mastery of these areas after each class and at the conclusion of the program, and (2) faculty assessments of blinded student memos (both in name and whether entering or finishing student) written before students begin PPA coursework, and after they complete it.

Describe the measures you used and the information gathered

We used two survey measures of student opinion on their achievement of learning objectives. We administered one survey at the end of each class offered this past academic year (see Table 2). For the first, we also asked all graduating students this past academic year to complete an experimental exit survey that repeated the same questions asked of them at the close of each class that they had earlier completed (see Table 5). Recorded in the respective tables are the average value of responses (that could vary between five and one, where five equals "excellently" and one equals "not accomplished").

As described in Table 3, we also ask students to write a policy memo at the start of our Master's Program (in PPA 200 before instruction begins) and at the end (in PPA 500 before advise on thesis completion begins). The goal of this process is to assess their ability in doing this both pre and post the PPA curriculum. PPA faculty then review these memos based upon the rubric in Table 3, with no student names or status of entering/finishing attached (with a minimum of two faculty looking at each). Table 4 contains the average scores resulting from

this assessment for this academic year (finishing fall 2010 or spring 2011) and for the three previous academic years.

What did you learn about the program's success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?

Regarding the results in Table 2 for student assessment of PPA core course learning objects at the time of class completion, we were pleased that the overall average for each course (in red) was very near 4.0 ("very well" in achieving an objective) or above for all courses. In particular, for PPA 205, Section 1 (4.55), PPA 220A (4.26); PPA 207 (4.32), PPA 210 (4.4), and PPA 240B (4.42), the scores in parenthesis indicate that overall, based upon student self assessment, we are more than just "achieving" our learning expectations and approaching a student average of "excellently" (5).

Regarding the results in Table 5 for student assessment of PPA core-course learning objectives at time of graduation, we were pleased that 34 out of the possible 60 student responses (57%) averaged above 4.0 ("very well" in achieving an objective). Given that these questions apply to specific course learning objectives, and asked far after most of the courses have been completed, we believe an average score above 4.0 on any of these specific learning objectives indicates that students feel we are doing a very good job at achieving them.

Regarding the results in Table 4 that summarize the average scores given by faculty on student memos written before and after going through the PPA curriculum, we are most pleased that we have maintained average values of 0.86 and 0.73 in value added (on a four point scale). This is calculated based upon the overall average score given to fall 2010 (spring 2010) student memos who had finished the PPA core courses of 2.26 (2.13), as compared to those starting in

fall 2010 whose average score was 1.40. At the bottom of Table 4, we also report an impressive

value added of 0.92 for the average value added calculated here for the same student.

So there is clear evidence here that students feel that on average we are achieving our

prescribed learning goals, and that through our own blind reading of pre/post policy memos

students are producing "value added" in terms of improvement in specific learning goals.

Though as discussed next, there may still be room for further improvement.

What areas need improvement within your program?

For the student survey results by course in Table 2, 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 they first began the PPA Master's Program in comparison to the score given to the same person when they 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.

Because of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated?

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.

- 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 has agreed 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.

- 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.

- 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 has agreed to spend more time on reviewing these basics next year.

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

- 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, but are 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.

- 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.

- 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.

How will you know if these changes achieved the desired results?

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.

Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics, course alignment?

We did begin a discussion of this at our May Retreat that will continue throughout the summer and into the next academic year as we go through a scheduled Program Review Process in which we have decided to concentrate on a more thorough review of our academic programs and assessment.

What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?

See above.

Table 1: PPA Learning Objective Matrix by Core Objectives and Courses

General	Specific	200-	205-	207-	210-	220A-	220B-	230-	240A-	240B-
Critical Thinking										
	problem definition	P	S	P	P	P		S	S	S
	research design and causal inference	S	P	P		S	S		S	S
	delineation of options	P			S	P			S	S
	implementation considerations	S				S	P	S	S	S
	ethical implications of choices	S	S	S	P	S	S	S	S	
Integrative Thinking										
(interdisciplinary skill sets	economic concepts and analysis	S		S		P	P	S		
brought to bear on public	political environment and analysis	S	S		P	S	S	S	S	S
policy analysis)	techniques of policy analysis	P	S			P	S			
	budgeting concepts and budget analysis	S				S	S	P		
	organizational analysis/change/development	S						S	P	P
	statistical analysis		S	P				S	S	
Effective Communication for Policy Audiences										
	report writing	P	P	P		S	S		S	S
	memo writing	S			P	S	S		S	S
	presentation of technical information	P	S	S		S	S	S		
	oral presentations	P	S	S					S	S
	effective presentations	P	S					S	S	S

Understanding Professional Role		200-	205-	207-	210-	220A-	220B-	230-	240A-	240B-	
	role of public sector in democratic/market system	P			S	P	S				
	role of nonprofit sector	P						S	S	S	
	California policy context	P			S	S	P	S	S		
	intergovernmental relations	S			S		P	P	S		
	role of policy analyst	S	P	P	S	P	S	S			
	role of public manager	S						S	P	P	
	public sector workplace and role ethics	S			P	S				S	
Practical Applications											
	influencing the policy process		S		P	S	S	S	S	S	
	practical problem solving	S	S			P	P		P		
	data collection -- how and where to get data		P	P		S	S	S	S	S	
	use of statistical and other data	S	S	P			S				
	benefit/cost analysis					P	P				
	group collaboration skills	P			S	S	S		S	S	
	understanding budgets							P	S		
	performance measurement							P	S	P	
	strategic planning							S	S	P	
	conflict resolution				P				S		
Key:											
P = primary coverage											
S = secondary coverage											
Blank = not covered											

Table 2: PPA Student Assessment of Core Learning Objectives by Course

Results of Course Assessments by Course for Fall 2010

Department of Public Policy and Administration

5 = excellently, 4 = very well, 3 = satisfactorily, 2 = poorly, 1 = not accomplished

Course	Learning Objective	Enroll	Polled	5		4		Ranked 3		2		1				average
PPA 200, Intro to PPA																
Section 1																
1 .	Critical thinking and analysis: Delineate options for solving those problems.	24	24	7	29.2%	11	45.8%	6	25.0%	0	0%	0	0%			**4.04**
2 .	Critical thinking and analysis: Maintaining a logical relationship between problem and solutions throughout your analysis.	24	24	9	37.5%	10	41.7%	5	20.8%	0	0%	0	0%			**4.17**
3 .	Effective communication for policy audiences: Construct a policy document that is clearly written, and includes data and technical information as appropriate.	24	24	7	29.2%	12	50.0%	4	16.7%	1	4.2%	0	0%			**4.04**
4 .	Effective communication for policy audiences: Practice giving oral presentations.	24	24	12	50.0%	7	29.2%	4	16.7%	1	4.2%	0	0%			**4.25**
5 .	Effective communication for policy audiences: Understand the effective use of oral presentation aids including PowerPoint and handouts.	24	24	11	45.8%	11	45.8%	2	8.3%	0	0%	0	0%			**4.38**
6 .	Understand the different roles of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.	24	24	14	58.3%	6	25.0%	3	12.5%	1	4.2%	0	0%			**4.39**
7 .	Develop skills in working effectively in groups.	24	24	13	54.2%	9	37.5%	1	4.2%	1	4.2%	0	0%			**4.42**
8 .	Insure you have a baseline understanding of the context for policy analysis in California. In particular the role of initiatives, fiscal austerity, and changing demographics.	24	24	12	50.0%	6	25.0%	6	25.0%	0	0%	0	0%			**4.25**
9 .	Understand the major research and/or professional conventions, practices, and methods of inquiry of the discipline	24	24	2	8.3%	11	45.8%	6	25.0%	4	16.7%	1	4.2%			**3.38**
10 .	Understand the major formats, genres, and styles of writing used in the discipline	24	23	2	8.7%	11	47.8%	7	30.4%	3	13.0%	0	0%			**3.52**
11 .	Practice reading and writing within the discipline	24	23	11	47.8%	9	39.1%	3	13.0%	0	0%	0	0%			**4.35**
12 .	Practice reading and writing as a learning process that involves peer and instructor feedback, revision, critical reflection, and self-editing	24	22	5	22.7%	10	45.5%	7	31.8%	0	0%	0	0%			**3.91**
	Overall Averages for section	24	24	9	37.0%	9	39.8%	4	19.0%	1	0%	0	0%			**4.09**

Section 1

1 . Appreciate the importance of the "front end" of research (i.e., research design).	7	7	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.71**
2 . Appreciate specific design principles that are common to a number of different types of research, such as the critical role of theories, hypotheses, and comparisons.	7	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
3 . Appreciate the importance of thinking systematically about establishing causality.	7	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
4 . Understand how to proceed from a concept to a means of measuring the concept.	7	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
5 . Understand the attributes, advantages, and limitations of various types of data collection methods, including: a) experiments; b) surveys; c) field research; d) accessing electronic data archives; and e) conducting historical analysis.	7	7	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
6 . Appreciate how to use simple data analysis techniques to draw tentative conclusions.	7	7	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.43**
7 . Understand how to write an effective research proposal.	7	7	3	42.9%	3	42.9%	1	14.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.29**
8 . Appreciate some of the ethical considerations applicable to applied social science research.	7	7	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.71**
Overall Averages for section	7	7	4	57.1%	3	41.1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.55**

Section 2

1 . Appreciate the importance of thinking through the entire design of a study before diving in.	15	15	5	33.3%	9	60.0%	1	6.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.27**
2 . Appreciate specific design principles that are common to a number of different types of research, such as the critical role of theories and hypotheses.	15	15	8	53.3%	4	26.7%	3	20.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.33**
3 . Understand the main approaches for detecting cause-and-effect relationships in scientific research, including those based on experimental and non-experimental designs.	15	15	4	26.7%	7	46.7%	4	26.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4**
4 . Learn how to proceed from a concept to a variable designed to measure the concept in a valid and reliable fashion.	15	15	5	33.3%	8	53.3%	1	6.7%	1	6.7%	0	0%	**4.13**
5 . Understand the advantages and limitations of various types of data collection methods, including: a) surveys; b) interviews; c) participant observations; d) content analysis, and; e) secondary data.	15	15	9	60.0%	3	20.0%	3	20.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.4**
6 . Understand the differences between descriptive and inferential data analysis, and their implications for research design and data collection.	15	15	7	46.7%	3	20.0%	4	26.7%	1	6.7%	0	0%	**4.07**
7 . Learn how to write an effective research proposal.	15	15	7	46.7%	7	46.7%	1	6.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.4**
8 . Appreciate some of the ethical considerations applicable to applied social science research.	15	15	9	60.0%	5	33.3%	1	6.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.53**
9 . Understand the strengths and limitations of various non-experimental designs including single case studies, small-n case comparisons, and large-n studies.	15	15	5	33.3%	7	46.7%	3	20.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.13**
10 . Learn the major criticisms of social science, and how to defend or critique a study	15	15	2	13.3%	9	60.0%	4	26.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**3.87**

from both positivist and post-positivist perspectives.

#	Outcome	Enrolled	Responded	5	5%	4	4%	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	Avg
11 .	Become aware of the politics of research, and understand how to position a study to influence policy decisions.	15	15	4	26.7%	4	26.7%	7	46.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**3.8**
	Overall Averages for section	15	15	6	39.4%	6	40.0%	3	19.4%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.18**

PPA 220A, Applied Economic Analysis I

Section 1

#	Outcome	Enrolled	Responded	5	5%	4	4%	3	3%	2	2%	1	1%	Avg
1 .	Problem definition: Understand the appropriateness of beginning a policy analysis by first defining the policy prolem in a statement that does not include solution option(s) to the "true" policy problem. (Critical Thinking)	26	20	9	45.0%	9	45.0%	2	10.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.35**
2 .	Delineation and evaluation of options: Understand the desirability of offering multiple solution options to a policy problem and evaluating these options in terms of criteria that include at least measures of efficiency and equity. (Critical Thinking)	26	19	9	47.4%	8	42.1%	2	10.5%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.37**
3 .	Techniques of policy analysis: Understand that wisdom to be drawn upon in making policy decisions comes from the market, experts, and politics; that this wisdom is usually conflicted from two of the sources, and mitigated by the third source (as illustrated by Munger's triangle). (Integrative Thinking)	26	20	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.65**
4 .	Economic concepts and analysis: Understand that important role that economic concepts (supply, demand, markets, perfect competition, monopoly, consumer and producer surplus, externalities, public goods, etc.) and thinking (rational prioritization, marginal analysis, quilibrium, probability, time discounting, benefit/cost, "bang for the buck, etc.) play in policy analysis. (Integrative Thinking)	26	20	7	35.0%	12	60.0%	1	5.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.3**
5 .	Role of public sector in democratic/market system: Understand that even competitive market systems can "fail" under certain circumstances (related to market structure, externalities, public goods, and information asymmetry), that a market system offers no guarantee that an outcome is viewed as "equitable" by society, and that the choice of different political institutions in a democracy yield different political/policy outcomes. Thus, there may be a role for public sector involvement in all these areas. (Understanding Professional Role)	26	19	5	26.3%	10	52.6%	4	21.1%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.05**
6 .	Role of policy analyst: Understand that the role of the policy analyst is to offer advice to policymakers on the desirability of alternative solutions to a policy problem. Both ethics and value neutrality are desired in policy analysis. If personal values enter a policy analysis, they should be noted. (Understanding Professional Role)	26	20	7	35.0%	11	55.0%	2	10.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.25**
7 .	Practical problem solving: Be able to conduct a basic policy analysis that involves the appropriate identification of the problem, the environment and sources of wisdom regarding the problem, solution alternatives, appropriate criteria to evaluate each alternative, and a recommendation on a course of action. (Practical Applications)	26	20	6	30.0%	10	50.0%	4	20.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.1**

	Enrolled	Polled	ranked5	%	ranked4	%	ranked3	%	ranked2	%	ranked1	%	Avg
8 . 8. (a) understand the major research and/or professional conventions, practices, and methods of inquiry of the discipline, (b) understand the major formats, genres, and styles of writing used in the discipline, © practice reading and writing as a learning process that involves peer and instructor feedback, revision, critical reflection, and self-editing. (GWI Goals)	26	20	5	25.0%	10	50.0%	5	25.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4**
Overall Averages for section	26	20	8	38.6%	10	48.7%	2	12.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.26**

PPA 240A, Policy Management and Administration I
Section 1

	Enrolled	Polled	ranked5	%	ranked4	%	ranked3	%	ranked2	%	ranked1	%	Avg
1 . Develop a sophisticated sense of the form(s) and functioning of organizations.	26	24	5	20.8%	15	62.5%	4	16.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.04**
2 . Become familiar with key scholars and theories in the organization theory literature as it applies to the public sector.	26	24	8	33.3%	11	45.8%	5	20.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.12**
3 . Understand the concept of "organization culture".	26	24	7	29.2%	13	54.2%	4	16.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.12**
4 . Understand some of the roles of a public manager.	26	24	3	12.5%	16	66.7%	5	20.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**3.92**
5 . Gain experience with graduate level literature review skills.	26	23	4	17.4%	8	34.8%	8	34.8%	3	13.0%	0	0%	**3.57**
Overall Averages for section	26	24	5	22.7%	13	52.9%	5	21.8%	1	2.5%	0	0%	**3.96**

Overall Totals and Averages for Fall 2010

Number Enrolled	Number Polled	ranked5	ranked4	ranked3	ranked2	ranked1	Overall Average
871	807	301	352	136	16	2	**4.16**
100%	92.65%	34.56%	40.41%	15.61%	1.84%	0.23%	

Results of Course Assessments by Course for Spring 2011

Department of Public Policy and Administration

5 = excellently, 4 = very well, 3 = satisfactorily, 2 = poorly, 1 = not accomplished

Course	Learning Objective	Enroll	Polled	5		4		Ranked 3		2		1		average
PPA 207 Quantitative Analysis														
Section 1														
1 .	Have a working knowledge of where to begin to gather data for policy analysis.	29	24	13	54.2%	9	37.5%	2	8.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.46**
2 .	Possess the ability to accumulate data and do basic descriptive analysis of it using the Excel spreadsheet program and a more advanced statistical program (STATA).	29	24	15	62.5%	6	25.0%	3	12.5%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.5**
3 .	Understand the importance of causal modeling before undertaking a statistical analysis.	29	24	10	41.7%	7	29.2%	7	29.2%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.12**
4 .	Understand the appropriate use of multivariate statistical techniques to identify causal relationships between variables.	29	24	10	41.7%	9	37.5%	5	20.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.21**
5 .	Have a working knowledge of regression analysis and the value it offers to answer policy questions.	29	24	13	54.2%	8	33.3%	3	12.5%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.42**
6 .	Be able to put together a research paper that describes a policy problem and undertakes a regression based research study to help offer a solution.	29	20	8	40.0%	8	40.0%	4	20.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.2**
	Overall Averages for section	29	23	12	49.3%	8	33.6%	4	17.1%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.32**
PPA 210 Political Env. of Policy Making														
Section 1														
1 .	Appreciate the role of the policy community in developing policy options	24	23	14	60.9%	7	30.4%	2	8.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.52**
2 .	Be better able to write effective short memos and papers	24	23	9	39.1%	8	34.8%	6	26.1%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.13**
3 .	Engage in more effective policy negotiations than would have been possible at the beginning of the course	24	23	10	43.5%	10	43.5%	3	13.0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.3**
4 .	Understand a useful way of thinking about how and why policies are adopted: the "multiple streams" (Kingdon) model	24	23	14	60.9%	8	34.8%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
5 .	Understand how policy problems are identified and policies may be attached to them	24	23	14	60.9%	8	34.8%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
6 .	Understand how problems are framed more or less effectively	24	23	14	60.9%	8	34.8%	1	4.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.57**
7 .	Understand key ethical frameworks for assessing public policy choices	24	23	11	47.8%	8	34.8%	4	17.4%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.3**
8 .	Understand the critical role of "policy entrepreneurs" in policy development	24	22	11	50.0%	8	36.4%	3	13.6%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.36**
9 .	Understand the ethical subtleties of professional role obligations	24	23	10	43.5%	6	26.1%	6	26.1%	0	0%	1	4.3%	**4.04**
10 .	Understand California's unique political features and how they impact the policy process	24	21	15	71.4%	5	23.8%	1	4.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.67**
	Overall Averages for section	24	23	12	53.7%	8	33.5%	3	12.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.4**

PPA 220B Economic Analysis II

Section 1

1 . Develop basic proficiency using quantitative spreadsheet models to inform policy questions.	25	19	3	15.8%	10	52.6%	6	31.6%	0	0%	0	0%	**3.84**
2 . Understand the basic theory and techniques for conducting a benefit-cost assessment.	25	19	5	26.3%	11	57.9%	3	15.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.11**
3 . Learn the limitations of benefit-cost analysis and economic efficiency and their proper role in a more comprehensive policy analysis.	25	19	8	42.1%	8	42.1%	3	15.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.26**
4 . Gain sufficient knowledge to critique an actual benefit-cost analysis, such as one issued by a government agency, think tank, or interest group.	25	19	5	26.3%	11	57.9%	3	15.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.11**
5 . 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.	25	19	7	36.8%	5	26.3%	6	31.6%	0	0%	1	5.3%	**3.89**
Overall Averages for section	25	19	6	29.5%	9	47.4%	4	22.1%	0	0%	0	1.1%	**4.04**

PPA 230 Public Budgeting

Section 1

1 . Develop an understanding of the political context of budget development and implementation at the federal, state, local and special district levels	30	29	8	27.6%	12	41.4%	8	27.6%	0	0%	1	3.4%	**3.9**
2 . Develop a working knowledge of the California state and local budget process, budget concepts, and budget terminology	30	29	11	37.9%	10	34.5%	7	24.1%	0	0%	1	3.4%	**4.03**
3 . Learn some basic skills in budget development, analysis, and implementation as well as cash and debt management	30	29	10	34.5%	11	37.9%	6	20.7%	2	6.9%	0	0%	**4**
4 . Understand the role of budgets for of a state or local agency or department	30	29	12	41.4%	12	41.4%	4	13.8%	1	3.4%	0	0%	**4.21**
5 . Gain an understanding of budgets as tools for accountability and performance management and measurement	30	29	11	37.9%	7	24.1%	9	31.0%	1	3.4%	1	3.4%	**3.9**
6 . Develop an appreciation for the intergovernmental dynamics of budgeting and their impact on budgeting behavior	30	28	9	32.1%	7	25.0%	10	35.7%	2	7.1%	0	0%	**3.82**
7 . 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	30	29	14	48.3%	8	27.6%	5	17.2%	2	6.9%	0	0%	**4.17**
8 . Improve written and verbal communication skills, including the presentation of budgetary information	30	28	8	28.6%	10	35.7%	8	28.6%	2	7.1%	0	0%	**3.86**
Overall Averages for section	30	29	10	36.1%	10	33.5%	7	24.8%	1	4.3%	0	0%	**3.99**

PPA 240B Management II

Section 1

1 . Create an integrated sense of the many facets that affect organizations both internally and externally.	29	24	15	62.5%	9	37.5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.62**
2 .Understand the variety of ways to undertake strategic planning and benefits and drawbacks of different tools.	29	24	12	50.0%	8	33.3%	4	16.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.33**

	Enrolled	Polled	ranked5	%	ranked4	%	ranked3	%	ranked2	%	ranked1	%	Avg
3 . Understand the way performance measurements are used and misused.	29	24	10	41.7%	9	37.5%	5	20.8%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.21**
4 . Understand the circumstances under which organizations change and how change can be managed and directed.	29	24	13	54.2%	7	29.2%	3	12.5%	1	4.2%	0	0%	**4.33**
5 . Gain comfort in the skill of assessing "what is going on" in real organizations at a macro-level – especially your comfort and competence using written documentation (web sites, budgets, strategic plans, annual reports etc.) to learn about organizations.	29	24	16	66.7%	6	25.0%	2	8.3%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.58**
Overall Averages for section	29	24	13	55.0%	8	32.5%	3	11.7%	0	0%	0	0%	**4.42**

Overall Totals and Averages for Spring 2011

Number Enrolled	Number Polled	ranked5	ranked4	ranked3	ranked2	ranked1	Overall Average
924	812	368	284	144	11	5	**4.23**
100%	87.88%	39.83%	30.74%	15.58%	1.19%	0.54%	

Table 3: PPA Policy Memo Description and Evaluation Rubric

Assignment Description: Identify a current public (governmental) problem/issue that you have some interest in and provide a decision maker with a briefing memo about the issue and possible options to deal with it. As appropriate, consider the economic, political, organizational and policy dimensions of the issue. Help the reader understand the complexities of the issue as well as how the issue may be understood differently by different groups of interested people. Be careful to distinguish between fact and opinion in your analysis. How you would recommend appropriate option(s) to deal with chosen problem/issue.

Note: When assigning points for each category where the term "appropriate" used in assessment measure, if a student has appropriately left out this category in their memo, they should receive three points.

Rubric for evaluating PPA briefing memos

	Missing (Zero Point)	Included but unsatisfactory (One Point)	Satisfactory (Two Points)	Very well done (Three Points)
Critical Thinking **(1) Is the problem/issue well defined?**		Problem/issue identified but real problems in clarity.	Problem/issue identified clearly but could be improved upon.	A full appropriate problem/issue statement included.
(2) Are possible options described?		Some options described, but not enough and/or could be stated much more clearly.	Reasonable amount of options stated, but could be improved upon.	Amount and clarity of options highly appropriate.
(3) Appropriate research design/causal inference to examine options?		Some mention of design/inference to explore options, but much improvement needed.	Design/inference mentioned and a specific plan of carrying out described, but could be improved upon.	Design/inference covered and plan to carry out is highly appropriate.
(4) Are		A brief mention	Implementation issues adequately	Issues of

implementation issues considered regarding options?		of implementation issues, but problems in thinking about and/or much more needed.	covered, but room for improvement in how described.	implementation of options fully covered in an appropriate manner.
Integrative thinking **5) Are appropriate economic, political, policy, budget, and/or administrative concepts and analyses considered?**		A mention of some of these concepts, but not adequate and/or mistakenly applied.	All appropriate concepts described, but mistakes/ confusion in application.	All concepts considered; little room for improvement.
Effective communication **(6) Is memo well written?** **7) Is previous findings and technical info appropriately presented?**		Written at a minimally acceptable level. Grammatical, organization, and/or style concerns remain. Minimal previous findings and tech info, but much more needed.	Written at a basic level appropriate for someone earning a Master's degree. Still room for some minor improvements. Previous findings and tech info offered at an acceptable level, but still room for improvement.	Superb writing. No concerns and a pleasure to read. Appropriate amount of previous findings and tech info included. The issue is framed well by this inclusion.
Professional role **(8) Is the role of public and/or non-profit sector appropriately recognized?** **(9) Does it integrate the political context?**		Role of public/non-profit sector mentioned, but in far too little detail. The politics surrounding the chosen	Public/non-profit sector role described adequately, but could improve upon and/or something left out. A serious attempt is made to integrate the	Excellent coverage of these sectors in memo in a manner that fully clarifies their role. Political context is appropriately and fully

		problem/issue are only mentioned, but covered in far too little detail.	political context of the problem/issue but still lacking in some way.	described.
(10) Are intergovernmental dimensions appropriately considered?		Intergovernmental dimensions are only mentioned in passing.	A serious attempt is made to discuss the intergovernmental issues, but it is still lacking in some way.	Intergovernmental issues are appropriately covered and there is little to criticize.
Practical applications **(11) Does it describe the practical considerations to influencing the policy process?**		Brief mention of practical considerations, but by far not enough.	Practical considerations are described, but still lacking in form of not fully enough or mistakes made.	Practical considerations fully described in appropriate manner and very little are left out.
(12) Is data appropriately used?		Very limited mention of data, but does little to help clarify the issue/problem.	Data is used throughout memo, but could use could be improved upon by more appropriate choices to include or application of data.	Data is integrated into the memo in a manner that helps illuminate the issue/problem and very little could be improved upon.

Table 4:
Summary of Faculty Assessment of Student Pre and Post Policy Memos

	Critical Thinking				Integrative Thinking	Effective Communication		Professional Role			Practical Applications			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	Average	Difference
Entering 2010-2011	1.52	1.27	0.92	1.20	1.32	1.64	1.62	1.59	1.44	1.55	1.29	1.39	1.40		scale of 0-3
Finishing Fall 2010	2.50	2.40	1.90	2.20	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.10	2.40	2.50	2.10	2.20	2.26	0.86	scale of 0-3
Finishing Spring 2011	2.42	2.14	1.71	1.85	2.05	2.37	2.22	2.22	2.14	2.12	2.12	2.20	2.13	0.73	scale of 0-3
Entering 2009-2010	1.58	1.33	0.96	1.11	1.42	1.84	1.35	1.16	1.21	0.88	1.30	1.30	1.28		scale of 0-3
Finishing Fall 2009	2.45	1.85	1.70	2.20	2.20	2.40	2.15	2.05	2.00	1.90	1.75	2.00	2.05	0.77	scale of 0-3
Finishing Spring 2010	2.36	1.95	1.82	2.14	2.18	2.64	2.14	2.14	2.32	2.00	2.23	2.18	2.17	0.83	scale of 0-3
Entering 2008-2009	1.69	1.16	0.81	0.91	1.24	1.80	1.51	1.34	1.04	0.92	0.76	1.22	1.24		scale of 0-3
Finishing Fall 2008	2.18	1.94	1.82	2.00	2.06	2.29	2.18	2.12	2.06	2.06	1.82	1.76	2.02	0.78	scale of 0-3
Finishing Spring 2009	2.59	2.30	1.81	1.78	1.78	2.11	2.04	1.96	1.85	1.70	1.63	1.93	1.96	0.75	scale of 0-3
Entering 2007-2008	0.52	0.41	0.48	0.52	0.70	0.89	0.56	0.44	0.41	0.74	0.44	0.59	0.56		scale of 0-2
Finishing 2007-2008	1.07	0.65	1.00	1.04	1.23	1.18	1.12	0.95	1.25	1.25	0.98	0.79	1.04	0.80	scale of 0-2

Summary of Person to Person Comparison of Students Entering and Exiting

	Critical Thinking				Integrative Thinking	Effective Communication		Professional Role			Practical Applications			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	Average	Difference
Averages 2010-2011	2.44	2.18	1.74	1.90	2.06	2.35	2.22	2.20	2.18	2.18	2.12	2.20	2.15	
Entering scores	1.67	1.30	0.95	1.05	1.36	1.84	1.42	1.28	1.00	1.02	0.96	1.17	1.23	0.92
difference	0.77	0.88	0.79	0.85	0.70	0.51	0.80	0.93	1.17	1.16	1.16	1.04		

Table 5: Survey Monkey Exit Survey of 2010-11 PPA Graduates

1. How well do you think the following CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYSIS learning objectives were achieved?

	Average	Count
A) Know how to delineate options for solving public policy/administration problems.	4.25	16
B) Know how to maintain a logical relationship between problems and solutions throughout your analysis.	4.25	16
C) Appreciate specific design principles that are common to a number of different types of research, such as the critical role of theories and hypotheses.	3.75	16
D) Possess the ability to accumulate data and do basic descriptive statistical analysis of it using the Excel spreadsheet program and a more advanced statistical program (SPSS).	3.5	16
E) Understand how policy problems are identified and policies may be attached to them.	4.13	16
F) Understand the appropriateness of beginning a policy analysis by first defining the policy problem in a statement that does not include solution options(s) to the "true" policy problem.	4.5	16
G) Understand the circumstances under which organizations change and how change can be managed and directed.	3.88	16
H) Appreciate the importance of thinking through the entire design of a study before diving in.	3.88	16
I) Understand the appropriate use of bivariate and regression statistical techniques to identify causal relationships between variables.	3.5	16
J) Understand how to effectively frame public policy/administration challenges.	4.19	16
K) Delineations and evaluation of options: understand that desirability of offering multiple solution options to a policy problem and evaluating these options in terms of criteria that include at least measures of efficiency and equity.	4.19	16
L) Understand the advantages and limitations of various types of data collection methods, including: surveys; interviews; participant observations; content analysis, and; secondary data.	4.25	16
M) Understand key ethical frameworks for assessing public policy choices.	3.88	16

1. How well do you think the following INTEGRATIVE THINKING learning objectives were achieved?

	Average	Count
A) Insure you have a baseline understanding of the context for policy/administrative analysis in California. In particular the role of initiatives, fiscal austerity, and changing demographics.	4.13	16
B) Have a working knowledge of regression analysis and the value it offers to answer policy questions.	3.56	16
C) Appreciate the role of the policy community in developing policy options.	4.13	15

D) Understand that the wisdom to be drawn upon in making policy decisions comes from the market, experts, and politics; that this wisdom is usually conflicted from two of the sources, and mitigated by the third source.   4.25   16

E) Develop basic proficiency using quantitative spreadsheet models to inform policy questions.   3.44   16

F) Develop an understanding of the political context of budget development and implementation at the federal, state and local (city and county) levels.   3.94   16

G) Familiarity with the concept of "organization culture" and how crucial understanding org culture is to creating a healthy and well-functioning workplace.   4.19   16

H) Create a more integrated sense of the form(s) and functioning or organizations.   4.13   16
I) Understand the importance of causal modeling before undertaking a statistical analysis.   3.67   15
J) Understand a useful way of thinking about how and why policies are adopted: the "multiple streams".   4.25   16

K) Understand the important role that economic concepts (supply, demand, markets, perfect competition, monopoly, consumer and producer surplus, externalities, public goods, etc.) and thinking (rational prioritization, marginal analysis, equilibrium, probability, time discounting, benefit/cost, "bang for the buck," etc.) play in policy analysis.   4.31   16
L) Understand the basic theory and techniques for conducting a benefit-cost assessment.   4.19   16
M) Develop a working knowledge of the California state and local budget process, budget concepts, and budget terminology.   4.31   16
N) Understand the pervasive nature of collective action problems and their impact on political mobilization.   3.94   16
O) Gained an understanding of budgets as tools for accountability.   3.75   16
Comments about integrative thinking:
Show Responses

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. How well do you think the following EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR POLICY AUDIENCES learning objectives were achieved?

	Average	Count
A) Can construct a policy document that is clearly written, and includes data and technical information as appropriate.	4.25	16
B) Have confidence in giving oral presentations.	4.13	16
C) Understand the effective use of oral presentation aids including Powerpoint and handouts.	4.38	16
D) Able to write effective memos and papers.	4.19	16
E) Can write an effective research proposal.	4.19	16
F) Able to put together a research paper that describes a policy problem and undertakes a regression based research study to help offer a solution.	3.81	16
G) Possess written and verbal communication skills, including the presentation of budgetary information.	4	16

H) Familiarity with graduate level literature review skills, including: data mining for articles, report and experts on the given policy topic; and the construction of traditional literature review tables on definitions, researcher venues, research methodologies, and research findings.   4.13   16

Comments about effective communication:

Show Responses

UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONAL ROLE

1. How well do you think the following UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL ROLE learning objectives were achieved?

	Average	Count
A) Understand the different roles of the public, private and nonprofit sectors.	4.31	16
B) Understand the critical role of "policy entrepreneurs" in policy development.	4.13	16
C) Understand that even competitive market systems can "fail" under certain circumstances (related to market structure, externalities, public goods, and information asymmetry), that a market system offers no guarantee that an outcome is viewed as "equitable" by society, and that the choice of different political institutions in a democracy yield different political/policy outcomes.	4.31	16
D) Understand the role of budgets for a state or local agency or department.	3.88	16
E) Familiarity with key scholars and theories in the organization theory literature as it applies to the public sector. Subjects to be examined include: the origin of the concept of bureaucracy; the origin of the field of public sector administration; the life cycle of public agencies; differences between vertical and horizontal communication; early leadership and management theories; and contemporary theories of org behavior and human relations in public agencies.	3.88	16
F) Understand the ethics of role obligations facing political entrepreneurs and other policy actors.	3.81	16
G) Understand that the role of the policy analyst is to offer advice to policymakers on the desirability of alternative solutions to a policy problem. Both ethics and value neutrality are desired in policy analysis.	4.25	16

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. How well do you think the following PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS learning objectives were achieved?

	Average	Count
A) Developed skills in working effectively in groups.	4.25	16
B) Appreciate ethical considerations applicable to applied social science research.	4	16
C) Know how to proceed from a concept to a variable designed to measure the concepts in a valid and reliable fashion.	3.88	16

D) Understand the differences between descriptive and inferential data analysis, and implications for research design and data collection.	3.81	16
E) Have a working knowledge of where to begin to gather data for policy analysis.	4.31	16
F) Can engage in effective policy negotiations.	3.81	16
G) Can conduct a basic policy analysis that involves the appropriate identification of the problem, the environment and sources of wisdom regarding the problem, solution alternatives, appropriate criteria to evaluate each alternative, and a recommendation on a course of action.	4.13	16
H) Have learned the limitations of benefit-cost analysis, economic efficiency, and their proper role in a more comprehensive policy analysis.	4	16
I) Possess basic skills in budget development, analysis and implementation and cash and debt management.	3.56	16
J) Familiar with active listening and HR intervention strategies, with particular emphasis on affirmative action, sexual harassment, disciplining and responding to employees exhibiting alcohol/drug impairment problems, and hiring and firing.	3	16
K) Understand the variety of ways to undertake strategic planning and benefits and drawbacks of different tools.	3.63	16
L) Possess sufficient knowledge to critique an actual benefit-cost analysis, such as one issued by a government agency, think tank, or interest group.	3.88	16
M) Possess an appreciation for the intergovernmental dynamics (particularly the relationships between the State of California, counties, and cities) of budgeting and their impact on budgeting behavior.	4.19	16
N) Understand the way performance measurements are used and misused.	3.94	16
O) Know 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 rooted in externalities.	4.25	16
P) Possess an 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.	4.38	16
Q) Can assess organizations at a macro-level -- especially your comfort and competence using written documentation (websites, debts, strategic plans, annual reports, etc.) to learn about organizations.	4.5	16

How would you rate the graduate program in Public Policy and Administration overall?

Average	Count
3.8	16