

Regents Program Review Two Page Summary Report, 2004

KSU, College of Arts and Sciences

KSU, Department of Political Science, CIP Codes 440401, MPA

October 7, 2004

Mission, Centrality, and Uniqueness

The mission of the department is to provide students with a foundation for the systematic study of public administration in the major fields of personnel, budgeting, organization theory, and public and not-for-profit management in preparation for administrative positions in the public sector at the federal, state, and local level, non-profit organizations, public interest groups, government commissions, international organizations, and government liaison positions in private corporations. In support of this mission, the department seeks to produce scholarship that contributes to Political Science and Public Administration. Faculty recognize the important linkage between research and quality instruction. The department is a student-centered, research-based learning community.

The MPA program trains future government managers and leaders. The program is central to the university's mission of preparing students "to be informed, productive, and responsible *citizens* who participate actively in advancing . . . *socio-political* undertakings." The MPA program also plays a central role in enhancing the university's efforts to promote international studies through teaching courses in Comparative Public Administration, recruiting international students, pursuing comparative research agendas, and developing exchange agreements with foreign universities.

The MPA program is unique in a number of ways. Unlike KU's MPA degree, which focuses on producing City Managers, or WSU's MPA degree, which focuses on producing county administrators, the MPA program at KSU is a generalist program. It produces graduates who can work in national, state, and local governments. Recently, the MPA program has developed a focus on International/Comparative Administration, which is also unique within our region and state. This emphasis complements the MA program's Certificate in International Service. The MPA program is also unique because it leverages faculty expertise in Urban Planning and Design, the College of Business, the Psychology Department, and the College of Human Ecology to allow its students to develop specializations in Budgeting, Human Resource Management, International/Comparative Public Administration, and Planning.

Quality of Faculty

The MPA program is an integral part of the department of Political Science. As such, the quality of the faculty of the MPA program is a function of the quality of the faculty in Political Science. The Department of Political Science includes one Distinguished University Professor, one University Distinguished Graduate Professor, and several faculty who are nationally or internationally known for their research. The director of the MPA program is president-elect of Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honor society for Public Administration. On an annual basis, Political Science faculty collectively produce one to two books, eight to sixteen articles and book chapters, and numerous book reviews and other professional publications. Although the program is integrated into Political Science, the program is inter-disciplinary, drawing on the expertise of programs in Urban Planning and Design, the College of Business, the Psychology Department, and the College of Human Ecology to allow students to develop specializations in Budgeting, Human Resource Management, Comparative Public Administration, and Planning.

All the faculty participating in the MPA program hold doctorates and their training and research coincide with the focus of the courses they teach. The program is nationally accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). This accreditation assures that the program and its faculty meet all national standards for graduate programs in public administration.

Quality of Students

One half of the student body comprises mid-career professionals seeking to advance in their positions while the other half are pre-service students. By offering most of the MPA curriculum in the evenings, the program attracts high-quality mid-career professionals who bring their maturity and real world experiences into the classroom. Because of the international reputation of some of the program's faculty, it attracts quality international students from countries like India, Bangladesh, Thailand, South Korea, Peoples Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, just to name a few. Most students entering the program have undergraduate GPAs of 3.3 or above. The student body in the program is diverse (in terms of race, ethnicity, national origin, and gender), which adds value to the quality of the learning environment.

Employment Demand

The program has a 100% success rate in placing its graduates in positions for which they have been trained. Foreign graduates of the program return home to highly-placed positions in their home countries. One Korean graduate returned to South Korea to become the Protocol Director for the President of South Korea. Most US graduates are employed in state and local government positions in Kansas. A few graduates have become city managers (including in Manhattan and Junction City) and several graduates have become budget analysts for the State of Kansas. Some of these former students are employed at the federal level or in not-for-profit organizations. The starting salaries for these graduates range from over \$30,000 to more than \$50,000. A few graduates have gone on to Ph.D. programs.

Service to the Discipline, University and Beyond

Departmental faculty service may be divided into three categories: Professional, university, and community. Professionally, faculty serve on editorial boards, participate in professional associations, review manuscripts, referee articles for publication, and are frequently interviewed by the media for their expertise on specific public issues. Most faculty also serve on dissertation committees for students in other departments or at other universities. One faculty member is the president-elect of Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honor society for public administrators. Other faculty members have organized conference sections for major national associations like the American Political Science Association, American Society of Public Administration, and the Southern Political Science Association. Within the university, members of the department play, or have recently played, leadership roles in Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, College Committee on Planning, and other governance bodies. One member of the department serves as the co-chair of the board of directors for the Kansas Center for Rural Initiatives. Another faculty member is the chair of the International Activities Council. Faculty regularly perform service activities at the community, state, national, and international levels. This service includes faculty publication in popular media (e.g., op-ed pieces), delivering public lectures, legislative testimony, consulting, and other activities.

Cost Effectiveness

Because the MPA is integrated into Political Science, it is appropriate to use cost effectiveness figures for the department. In FY2003, the ratio between Total SCHP and FTE was 613 student credit hours (about 204 students) for each FTE. In FY2003, the ratio between POLSC's total expenditures and total SCHP was \$167.50 per student credit hour. POLSC teaches 1.5% of the institution's total SCHP. POLSC expends about 1.4% of the total expenditures. In addition, the program efficiently uses the faculty resources of the university through drawing on faculty in Urban Planning and Design, the College of Business, the Psychology Department, and the College of Human Ecology to teach specializations in Budgeting, Human Resource Management, Comparative Public Administration, and Planning. This negates the need to hire additional MPA faculty within the department, saving the university hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.