

NASPAA Self-Study Report Volume I

September 1, 2002

**Master of Public Administration
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Political Science
601 University Drive
Southwest Texas State University
San Marcos, TX 78666**

Effective September 1, 2003 **Texas State University – San Marcos**
Because the re-accreditation and the name change were effective the same day the name was changed to Texas State in the text.

Certified By:

Signature, NASPAA Principal Representative Title	Date
Patricia M. Shields, Director, Master of Public Administration Program	

Signature, Chief Academic Officer	Title	Date
Robert Gratz, Vice President for Academic Affairs		
Southwest Texas State University		

PROGRAM SUMMARY

ITEM	DATA
1. Title of degree (1.3)	Master of Public Administration
2. Off-Campus locations (9.1)	none
3. Number of credits normally required for degree (4.3-A)	39
4. Total credits in required courses (4.21-B)	30
5. Total credits in elective courses (4.22-A)	9
6. Specializations advertised as available (4.22-C)	Government Information Systems, International Relations, Legal and Judicial Administration, Public Finance Administration, General Public Administration, Administration of Allied Health Services, Administration of Criminal Justice Systems, Human Resources Administration, Public Personnel Administration, Urban Planning
7. Number of credits which can be reduced for prior undergraduate education (4.3-B)	none
8. Number of credits which can be reduced for significant professional experience (4.3-B)	none
9. Number in faculty nucleus (5.1-B)	7
10. Number of students in degree program (6.3-D)	Full-time, 13; Part-time, 70; total 83
11. Is a thesis or major professional report required? (4.3-C)	Yes
12. Is a comprehensive examination required? (4.3-C)	Yes
13. Is an internship available? Is it required? (4.4-B)	Yes, not required

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STANDARD 1.0--ELIGIBILITY FOR PEER REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION

1.1 Eligibility

These standards assume a commitment to the use of peer review procedures to assess educational quality. Formal peer review and accreditation processes of NASPAA are open to programs which meet the following:

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University is eligible for peer review and re-accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.

1.2 Institutional Accreditation

The parent institution is accredited by its regional association.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Texas State University. The most recent re-accreditation was in 1999.

1.3 Professional Education

The primary objective is professional education preparing persons for leadership and management roles in public affairs/policy/administration;

- A.** The MPA Program at Texas State University prepares both in-service and pre-service students for leadership and management roles in public service. The MPA Program continuously seeks input from students, alumni and employers to prepare students for careers as managers and leaders in public service.
- B.** The Department of Political Science at Texas State University offers the Master of Public Administration.

Other masters degrees offered by the Department of Political Science include a Master of Arts and Master of Arts with a major in Legal Studies.

1.4 Program Length

The program must have been in operation at least four years to provide adequate data for evaluating program policies, procedures, and placement of graduates.

The Master of Public Administration program at Texas State University was authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 1973 and graduated its first group of students in December 1974.

STANDARD 2.0--PROGRAM MISSION

2.1 Mission Statement

The program shall state clearly its educational philosophy and mission and have an orderly process for developing appropriate strategies and objectives consistent with its mission, resources, and constituencies.

A. Background

The Master of Public Administration Program at Texas State University was established in 1973. Texas State is located in San Marcos, a small city located in Central Texas along the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio. During 29 years of operation, the program has graduated 655 students. The faculty size has varied over the years but is now at a current complement of seven. Enrollments in the past four years have ranged from 88 in the Fall of 1998 to 83 in the Fall of 2002.

The MPA Program began as a thesis program with a required internship. Prior to 1981, seven career support areas were offered: personnel, finance, urban and regional planning, criminal justice, government information systems, human resources, and allied health. Today, besides these seven career support areas, the MPA program offers three additional ones: legal and judicial administration, international relations, and general public administration. The general public administration career support area is the most popular and requires one course in information systems and two electives, allowing a student some flexibility in degree design. The MPA Program was certified by NASPAA in 1982 and then accredited in 1989 and re-accredited in 1996.

Since its inception, the Texas State MPA Program has offered about four classes a semester in downtown Austin. Like all Texas State MPA classes, Austin classes are offered in the evening. Austin is the capital of Texas and has a significant state workforce. The majority of our students are in-service and live and work in Austin. Typically, our core faculty teach in Austin. Courses taught in Austin and San Marcos are identical.

During the 1970s and 1980s the MPA Program offered classes in San Antonio, Texas, and occasionally in Temple, Texas. During the early 1990s enrollments and mission failed to justify course offerings in these locations. Therefore, the locations were subsequently dropped.

Over the years, as a result of internal and external assessments as well as NASPAA reviews, the MPA program has evolved to meet the changing needs and challenges of public service education. For example, in response to NASPAA requirements that we engage outside constituencies, we established an Advisory Council that began in 1989 and has met three times a year thereafter. The Advisory Council has been instrumental in mission development, mission revision, review and revision of admission policy as well as curriculum change.

In order to meet the needs of citizens in North Austin, Texas State partnered with other regional institutions and established the Multi Institutional Teaching Center (MITC). The MPA Program was asked to participate. We agreed with the provision that the classes in downtown Austin be considered part of the MITC. As a result we moved one class a semester to the North Austin MITC location and retained the other three classes in downtown Austin.

In the Spring of 2002, The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Approved a Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA). Initial signs suggest this will be a popular major. We anticipate growth in pre-service enrollment as BPA students graduate.

B. Mission Statement

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY: During faculty and MPA Advisory Council meetings (March 2002) the MPA Program articulated its program philosophy.

Foremost, we believe that public service is an honorable and noble calling and public service education is our calling. We educate practitioners and stress the application of theory to the larger world of public administration. As such, students and their welfare take a high priority. It is our job to help students realize their potential in the context of public administration and management. Thus we try to teach skills to meet students' professional needs as well as provide a broader (democracy in action) perspective that stresses ethics. We believe that the best decisions emerge through consultative processes where input from key stakeholders is valued, sought and used. Our goal is an accessible faculty who promote an educational community with a generous spirit where people learn from each other both in and out of the classroom.

PROGRAM MISSION

The MPA Program's mission is to prepare students for careers as managers and leaders in the public service.

The program primarily serves the diverse community that is Central Texas. Such service is provided through course work, professional development opportunities, internships and applied research projects.

The Program responds to the changing public service environment through: an innovative curriculum, faculty scholarship and service, links to professional organizations, interaction with governmental agencies, and a commitment to state-of-the-art technology.

The Program is distinguished by emphasizing the central role of ethics in public service; reinforcing the use of technology in management; providing professional and educational opportunities to a diverse student body; delivering classes at convenient times and locations; offering a variety of career support areas; enabling rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty; providing students and alumni with professional networking opportunities; focusing on continuing professional

development; emphasizing management in political institutions and processes; and integrating theoretical and applied approaches to public management.

The mission is divided into four components. The first component is short and provides the easy-to-remember overarching mission of the program. The second component recognizes the regional nature of our mission and lays out the processes used to achieve our mission: course work, professional development, internships and applied research projects. The third component outlines the concrete ways the program responds to the changing public administration environment. The fourth component recognizes specific characteristics that we believe distinguish us as unique (provide students and alumni with professional networking opportunities, integrate theoretical and applied approaches) or that we value (ethics, reinforcing the use of technology in management, rich and frequent contact between faculty and students).

Texas State has a formal strategic planning process. The MPA Program is responsible for its own strategic plan that is later integrated into the Political Science Department Plan. The Political Science Strategic Plan subsequently becomes part of the College of Liberal Arts and University's Plans. The MPA Program uses the mission statement to develop many strategic planning objectives and strategies. (See Appendix A for selected portions of the Texas State MPA Program Strategic Plan that link to the mission statement).

The students of the MPA program are primarily (80%) part-time in that they are employed full or part time. The majority of students live and work in Austin. All core classes are offered in the evening. About two courses a year are offered over the Internet. A select few of the classes in the career support areas are offered during the day. On the surface it would appear that the Texas State MPA Program competes with two MPA Programs in Central Texas (The University of Texas at San Antonio and the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin). We draw a few students from north San Antonio and do not compete with the UT San Antonio program. Since Austin is our primary source of students, the LBJ School is our nearest competitor. Fortunately, the LBJ School has a very different mission (policy orientation and pre-service students). The two programs complement each other.

Opportunities: The Texas State MPA Program should benefit from the new Bachelor of Public Administration offered by the Political Science Department. Preliminary evidence suggests that the program has strong enrollments, and interest in the MPA Program is high among undergraduates. The Hobby Center for Public Service and the Certified Public Management Program give the program statewide exposure. The Hobby Center also supports the program by providing additional discretionary money to the MPA Director. The money has been used to fund student travel expenses, scholarships, as well as some faculty travel. We have also recruited about 5 students from the Certified Public Management Program. The MPA Program also benefits from the journal *Armed Forces and Society* that Pat Shields edits. The journal gives the program exposure both inside and outside the university. In addition, the journal has provided graduate students with the opportunity to work as research assistants. There is a strong international component to the program. Students can choose the International Relations Career Support Area.

Howard Balanoff offers an international course that often includes international travel.¹ Students have traveled to Eastern Europe, France, Spain and Great Britain as well as South and Central America. There have also been several trips to Mexico. Students have also traveled to England, Latvia and France to collect data for their Applied Research Projects.

Threats: The program is threatened by a possible university hiring freeze and by the uncertainty of maintaining current faculty lines that may be lost to retirement or resignation etc. Faculty salaries are also relatively low. There are very few sources of tuition reimbursement to offset recent increase in graduate tuition and larger fees associated with the MITC.

Strengths: The Texas State MPA Program has a rare combination of academic excellence and diversity. One claim to academic excellence comes from the national awards that our students received for their research. In three of the last four years one of our students has won the Pi Alpha Alpha award for the best student manuscript. Seven regional and local awards for student papers in the last six years also support this claim. An additional example of excellence is Charles Matthews' (MPA 1999) selection by NASPAA as the winner of the Zuck Award for Public Courage.² Our student diversity is exceptional. In the summer and fall of 2001, 75 percent of our graduates were minority. Further, two of the three Pi Alpha Alpha award winners were Hispanic women.

The program also counts among its strengths a committed faculty that appreciates diversity and expects excellence. The Program is served by a strong curriculum that has immediate meaning and applicability to our in-service students.³ Another source of strength is our close professional ties with students and alumni. We do this through the MPA Advisory Council, which has been in continuous existence since 1989 and through the Central Texas Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (CenTex ASPA)⁴. Both organizations are composed of alumni and students and often jointly sponsor program events (e.g., mentoring mixers). Finally, we have taken advantage of Texas State internal grants (see Standard 8.4) that allow us to continually upgrade instructional technology.

Weaknesses: While the MPA Program has an extraordinary degree of student diversity, faculty diversity is weak. We have one Asian faculty member and no African American or Hispanic faculty members among the faculty nucleus. There are severe constraints on all faculty time and the Director's in particular. Activities like recruiting are limited.

Distinctive Competencies: We believe that the Pi Alpha Alpha awards (2001, 2000, 1998) demonstrate that our students' Applied Research Projects are among the best research papers in the nation. We are also able to recruit and retain quality minority

¹ Students may take this class as part of the International Relations or General public Administration Career Support Areas. For more information see Standard 4.22 of this document.

² Commissioner Matthews is also a member of the Texas Railroad Commission and is one of eight statewide Texas elected officials.

³ Information provided at exit interviews after the oral examination.

⁴ Texas State students, alumni and faculty make up approximately 80% of the CenTex membership.

students. We engage students and alumni in life long learning through our Advisory Council, CenTex ASPA and the Certified Public Managers Program. Our program is balanced emphasizing both qualitative and quantitative skills. We do a good job of integrating the theoretical and applied.⁵ Finally, our program is distinctive for its emphasis on ethics. For example, Dr. Garofalo our ethics instructor has not only published widely on this topic, but he is Chair of Texas State's Institutional Review Board, which reviews the ethical issues associated with human subjects research⁶.

Innovations: Several years ago the Advisory Council developed a unique set of by-laws that guarantee the Council's involvement in continuous assessment. The by-laws set up three committees: Program Trends, Mentoring, and Student. The Program Trends Committee makes regular reports and is the first to discuss possible program changes such as new courses, admission standards changes, and internship program revisions. The Mentoring Committee develops, implements, and assesses mentoring strategies. The Student Committee is responsible for student orientation. The format of the new student orientation has changed as a result of Student Committee discussion and recommendations. (See Appendix B for a copy of the Advisory Council's By-laws and a roster of current members.)

The Oral Examination has been a source of many innovations. Originally the student defended their Applied Research Project in an oral exam that included a three-person MPA faculty committee. The first innovation was to include outside faculty and Texas State administrators on the committees. Outside committee members were chosen because they had an expertise that coincided with the student's topic.⁷ Subsequently, we have added practitioners to the oral exam committee. Practitioners (often Texas State MPA alumni) usually have an expertise associated with students' topics. In addition, we try to find minority practitioners (in corresponding fields) to match up with minority students. This enables a rich opportunity for mentoring.⁸ Finally, we now schedule many of our oral exams in the Capitol of the State of Texas and the San Marcos City Hall. We believe that this practice demonstrates our commitment to public administration practice. It also demonstrates that we are recognized at the seat of state and local power.⁹ In the last three years we have begun to use electronic list serves to communicate with students and alumni. This has enabled us to better keep in touch. If there are events or schedule changes, we can notify students immediately. Alumni are informed about the mentoring mixers and other CenTex events such as luncheons and conferences. We used the MPAGRAD-L to contact alumni for purposes of the self-study.

⁵ Data that support this claim are obtained from the Alumni survey and exit interviews.

⁶ Yet another example of bridging the applied and theoretical.

⁷ For example, David Rejino examined formula funding in the Texas university systems. Special Assistant to the President Michael Abbott served on his committee. Dr. Abbot works with the Texas State's budget. Several of our student papers investigate the link between the philosophy of pragmatism and public administration. Dr. Vince Luizzi the Chair of the Philosophy Department and noted Pragmatism scholar has served on several oral exam committees.

⁸ Paul Williams, the Chief of Police of Austin Community College, is on criminal justice related ARPs. He often works with young African American students.

⁹ It is also consistent with our mission (interaction with governmental agencies - Mission Element 10 see Table 2.1).

Problems: The weak economy and an expected State of Texas budget shortfall may prove problematic in the future. We have limited financial aid or scholarships for students. The Coordinating Board has recently approved a Bachelor of Public Administration. We anticipate an increase in enrollment. This may stress current faculty resources. Most of the faculty nucleus are 50 years old or older. We may face problems of program continuity in the future.

Constraints: Student financial aid and scholarship opportunity are limited. Over the last ten years, Texas State has authorized several new master's degrees in related fields (Criminal Justice, Legal Studies, Health Services Research, Applied Sociology, Social Work, etc.) There is, thus, more internal competition for students interested in policy or public administration. We have inadequate technical support for our web page. This constrains timely updates.

C. Mission Process

In January of 1998, the Texas State MPA Program held a day long Mission Retreat. At that time a Mission Statement was developed. During the morning session, 20 external constituencies were engaged in the process. Many of the participants were from the advisory board. Others were from the larger community. We tried to ensure diversity by including an elected official and practitioners from federal, state and local government. We also included a mix of students, alumni, and non-alumni practitioners. African Americans, Hispanics, Anglos and a person with a disability were represented. The morning discussion consisted of brainstorming. We talked about the program's place in the community, what its graduates should be able to accomplish and contribute to the public service. The competencies, knowledge and skills we should expect of a Texas State MPA were also discussed. A trained facilitator led the event and the faculty mostly listened. Jeffrey Kauffmann, one of the participants and Director of Strategic Planning for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, suggested that we develop a short easy-to-remember one sentence mission punch line to begin the mission statement. This is the rationale behind, *"The MPA's Program's mission is to prepare students for careers as managers and leaders in the public service,"* which is the first sentence of our mission statement.

In the afternoon session the faculty processed the morning discussion and with the help of a facilitator developed an initial mission statement. The mission statement was further refined at a subsequent faculty meeting and later brought before the MPA Advisory Council for review and approval.

The Texas State MPA Program revised its mission statement during the 1999/2000 academic year. The process began as informal faculty discussions of the existing mission statement. A consensus emerged that the current mission statement did not reflect certain aspects of the program. In addition, further refinement was necessary to take into account trends in Public Administration. Namely, the mission statement did not include any reference to diversity, leadership, technology, or ethics.

The formal mission statement revision process began as a mini-retreat (2 hours) with the MPA Advisory Council during its regularly scheduled 1999, October 3rd meeting. There were approximately 25 stakeholders at the meeting including Public Administration professionals from state and local government, private consultants, faculty, and students. The group was a rich mixture including Hispanics, African Americans, Anglos, and men and women in their 50s, 40s, 30s, and 20s. We drew upon a trained facilitator (Joy Boone) from The Department of Health Services Research. During the meeting, members of the Advisory Council discussed the importance of diversity, leadership, technology, and ethics in public administration. Key ideas from the discussion were incorporated into a revised mission statement that was formally revised during faculty meetings.

D. Deviations from Standards:

There are no deviations from the standards based on our mission.

2.2 Assessment

The program shall assess its students' performance and the accomplishment of its objectives. Assessment procedures and measures may take any form appropriate to the program and its circumstances, but each program shall develop and use procedures for determining how well it carries out its mission.

Assessment Procedures:

Linking Assessment Directly to Mission: We have a formal mechanism to link assessment to the mission. The first step in the Texas State MPA Program mission-assessment process was the disaggregation of the formal mission statement into 24 mission element statements. The mission elements were used as the springboard for the collection of assessment data. Assessment mechanisms (survey, content analysis, interviews, etc.) are linked to each program element. Mission elements and NASPAA standards are used to construct specific survey instruments. For example, the exit survey, alumni survey, and employer interviews drew directly from the mission elements to construct at least some of the questionnaire items. The 24 mission element statements and their connection to assessment mechanisms are summarized in Table 2. 1. Assessment activities discussed in subsequent sections are linked to the mission through the unique number assigned each mission element.

The second step in the mission assessment process involved connecting the mission with Texas State's formal strategic planning processes. In this way the University wide strategic planning process supports the program's mission. During faculty meetings since 1999 MPA faculty developed a set of strategic planning objectives, strategies, outcomes, measures, etc., that were directly linked to the revised mission. Table 2.1 also shows the link between our formal strategic plan and the mission elements. Appendix A contains portions of the MPA Program Strategic Plan and connects each portion to a mission element (s). Appendix J summarizes how well we are adhering to the mission using multiple sources of evidence.

Table 2.1
Linking Mission to Assessment

Mission Element	Strategic Plan*	Assessment methods
The Program primary serves:		
1. the diverse community that is Central Texas.	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Review of student files
Such service is provided through:		
2. regular course work	More than one objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Program exit survey • Course evaluations • Annual Faculty Evaluations
3. professional development	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Review of Centex** activities • Mentoring mixer • Advisory board feedback • Annual faculty review
4. internships		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of internship notebook • Advisory Council Program Trends committee
5. Applied Research Projects	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards & conference presentations of Capstone papers.**** • Formal comparative assessment*** • Alumni survey • Assessment by committee members outside the department • Student Oral defense of the Capstone projects
The Program responds to the changing environment through:		
6. an innovative curriculum	More than one objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Council Program Trends Committee activities • Interview at Oral Exam • Exit Survey • Employer Interviews*****
7. faculty scholarship	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal departmental faculty review policy (promotion & tenure) • Annual faculty review (post tenure review)

8. faculty service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal departmental faculty review policy (promotion & tenure) • Annual faculty review (post tenure review)
Mission Element Table 2..1 (cont.)	Strategic plan*	Assessment methods
9. links to professional associations and organizations	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Review of CenTex ** activities • Exit Survey • MPAJOBS list serve
10. interaction with governmental agencies	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni survey • Review of CenTex** Activities • MPAJOBS list serve
11. a commitment to state-of the-art technology.	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit survey • Documented ongoing improvements to computer lab • Exit survey • Employer Interviews*****
The Program is distinguished by:		
12. emphasizing the central role of ethics in public service,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview at Oral Exam • Employer Interviews***** • Exit survey • Alumni Survey
13. reinforcing the use of technology in management,	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview at Oral Exam • Exit Survey
14. providing opportunity to a diverse student body,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit survey • Review of student body diversity statistics
15. delivering classes at convenient times and locations,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Schedule of classes • Interview at Oral Exam
16. offering a variety of career support areas,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review • Interview at Oral Exam
17. enabling rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni survey • Graduate College Exit Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Exit survey
18. providing students with professional networking opportunities,	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Graduate College Exit Survey • Mentoring Committee Advisory Council • Review of CenTex** and Advisory Council activities • Mentoring mixer

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit survey • Practitioner Oral exam committee
19. providing alumni with professional networking opportunities,	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Review of CenTex** and Advisory Council activities • Mentoring Mixer
Mission Element Table 2.1 (cont.)	Strategic Plan*	Assessment Method
20. focusing on continuing professional development	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Graduate College Exit Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Review of CenTex** activities • Exit Survey
21. emphasizing management in political institutions and processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate College Exit Survey • Exit Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Employer Interviews
22. integrating theoretical and applied approaches to public management.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Graduate College Exit Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Exit Survey • Employer Interview
23. Prepare students as managers in the public service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Exit Survey • Employer interviews
24. Prepare students as leaders in the public service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumni Survey • Exit Survey • Interview at Oral Exam • Employer Survey

*The element was linked to a strategic planning objective/strategy (See Appendix A for examples of the explicit link between mission elements and strategic planning objectives.)

** CenTex is the local chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA).

*** See Appendix C. Beck (1993); Almaguel (1997); and Gute (1999)

**** See Appendix D.

Appendix J summarizes the links between the mission statement and the assessment evidence that is provided throughout this document. Table J.1 provides clear evidence that the Texas State MPA Program is mission driven and that it is achieving its mission.

Assessment Using the Literature on Master's Education

Finally, we assess our program using the literature on master's education. In *Silent Success: Master's Education in the United States*, Clifton Conrad, Jennifer Haworth and Susan Miller¹⁰ identified 14 characteristics of "high-quality" masters programs.

They are:

Culture:

- unity of purpose among program participants
- supportive learning environment

Planned Learning Experience:

- Core course work
- immersion
- doing centered learning
- individualization
- tangible product
- out-of-class activities

Resources:

- institutional support
- departmental support

Leadership and the Human Dimension:

- faculty involvement
- faculty with non-university workplace experience
- committed students with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- program leadership

We believe and assessment evidence supports that the Texas State MPA Program has all of the characteristics of high quality master's experiences. Table 2.2 outlines the

¹⁰ Conrad, C., Haworth, J. and Miller, S. *Silent Success: Master's Education in the United States*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. The material for this section came from Chapter 10 "Attributes of High-Quality Master's Experiences" pp. 295-313.

connection between the Texas State MPA Program and evidence showing how we adhere to the characteristics of high quality master's experiences.¹¹

Table 2.2
The Texas State MPA Program and the Characteristics of a Quality Masters Experience

Characteristics of High Quality Master's Experience	Evidence
Culture	
1 Unity of purpose among program participants	1. The program has a mission statement that was developed and modified by program participants. The volume of assessment data supports this claim.
2. Supportive Learning Environment	2. MPA Exit and Alumni Survey results support that faculty are accessible. The Learning Environment index score in Graduate Exit survey is high. Exit interviews confirm that students feel the learning environment is supportive. Our program philosophy supports this claim. <i>"Our goal is an accessible faculty who promote an educational community with a generous spirit where people learn from each other both in and out of the classroom."</i>
Planned learning Experience	
3. Core courses	3. We have a 30 hour core.
4. Immersion	4. The Capstone experience that results in the Applied Research Project extends over two courses and allows students to be immersed in the topic. International trips also offer an immersion experience.
5. Doing centered learning	5. Class assignments in many courses stress "doing centered learning." This is particularly true of the Applied Research Project. Students must collect empirical data and are thus engaged in doing centered learning. Also, principles of John Dewey's Pragmatism (a doing

¹¹ The Advisory Council was enthusiastic about this portion of the self-study. Members of the Council discussed the criteria and there was widespread agreement that the characteristics fit Council members experiences as students in the program. The table and discussion were originally in an appendix. On the recommendation of the Advisory Council the discussion was moved to the text.

¹² See Shields, Patricia. "Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Science: A Tool for Public Administration." in *Research in Public Administration*. Vol. 4., edited by Jay White. (JAI

	centered philosophy) form the basis for the Capstone sequence. ¹²
6. Individualization	6. The applied research project is an individualized experience. There is significant one-on-one time with the professor. See the POSI 5397 Web site.
7. Tangible product	7. Applied Research Project
8. Out-of-class activities	8. Mentoring Mixers, Centex Activities, Pi Alpha Alpha awards ceremony. Texas ASPA Conferences, Student Orientation, Regular Advisory Council meetings that include students.
Resources	
9. Institutional support	<p>9. The institution's support is high. Administrators such as deans and vice presidents participate in MPA Oral Exams. This shows the institution's willingness (at a top leadership levels) to support the program.</p> <p>Dr. Willoughby (Dean of the Graduate College) has provided refreshments for the MPA Advisory Council Meetings (mini mission retreat).</p> <p>Gerald Hill, Vice President for University Advancement, is on the MPA Program Advisory Council.</p> <p>Dr. Ellis (Dean of Liberal Arts) speaks highly of the MPA Program at College meetings.</p> <p>The original idea for the list serve came from Media Services and the Faculty Advancement Center. Media Services (subsequently) hosts the server for the list serves.</p>
10. Departmental support	<p>The political science department has shown consistent support for the program. Dr. Opheim, Chair of the Political Science Department) has attended Advisory Council Meetings. The Department has supported promotion and tenure of PA Professors.</p> <p>Non PA faculty including the Chair sit on PA Oral exams.</p>
Leadership and the Human Dimension	
11. Faculty involvement	11. Faculty involvement is affirmed in exit interviews, exit surveys, and alumni surveys. It is also affirmed by faculty attendance at Advisory Council meetings, mentoring mixers, awards banquets, Centex Board meetings and student orientation.
12. Faculty with non-university workplace experiences	12. Our adjunct faculty bring non-university workplace experiences to the program.
13. Committed students with diverse backgrounds and experiences	13. As the self-study will show we have wide diversity in our student body. Students show their commitment by their willingness to take part in Advisory Council elections, mentoring mixers, and as alumni when they serve as Council members and oral exam committee

Press: Stamford, CT): 195-225 for an extensive discussion of the pragmatic principles that frame the capstone experience of Texas State's MPA Program.

	members.
14. Program leadership	14. Examples of program leadership include the mission process, the engaged Advisory Council and CenTex ASPA presence. (Dr. Shields is on the CenTex ASPA Board.)

Assessment procedures: Sources of Assessment Information

Capstone Projects: The Applied Research Project (ARP) is the Texas State MPA Program's capstone project. The ARP is a cumulating experience and demonstrates in a concrete and summative way the analytic, policy, organization and writing skills of the student. The Applied Research Project process is a multidimensional assessment mechanism. First, there is a transparency to the process that allows for broad assessment and program feed back. ARPs are defended before a three-member committee. The Texas State library catalogues all ARPs (each has a unique call number). Titles of ARPs (since 1992) are available on the MPA web site as are abstracts and complete documents for more recent papers.

http://www.swt.edu/~ps07/arp_index.htm Index of Applied Research Projects since 1993.

Secondly, students often perform program assessment activities as part of their Applied Research Projects. For example, there is an employer assessment of the MPA Program, an alumni survey, and several studies assessing the quality of ARPs. When student projects are used to assess the program we ask Texas State administrators to sit on the oral committee.¹³ The result is a multidimensional assessment. Student performance (both written and oral) is assessed. The committee members are also able to provide a comparative frame of reference (How does the MPA Program compare to other Texas State Graduate Programs?). In addition, the program is able to collect and share assessment data with a key external constituency –university administration. In this capacity the Deans have found the projects useful as a form of institutional assessment. (See Appendix C for a list of the capstone projects used to assess the program.)

Third, the oral examination committee structure serves as an assessment mechanism. Committee members often come from outside the MPA Program. This opens our Capstone Projects to broad outside scrutiny. Committee members include faculty from other departments as well as administrators such as deans, chairs and vice presidents. Lately, we have opened the oral examination process to practitioners. We have had the Chief of Staff for the Lieutenant Governor, the Chief of Police of the Austin Community College, the City Manager of San Marcos, a San Marcos City Council Member, librarian, Air Force Colonel and many other practitioners serve on committees. The oral exams are also now often held at San Marcos City Hall and in a Senate Conference room in the State Capitol. This practice ties to other mission components including “interaction with different agencies” and “networking opportunities.”¹⁴

¹³ Michael Willoughby, Dean of the Graduate College, has sat on four Applied Research Project oral examinations. In addition, Ann Marie Ellis (Dean of the College of Liberal Arts) and Robert Smallwood (Associate VP for University Assessment) participated in Bruce Hermes’ oral (employer assessment of the MPA Program). When deans are invited, the Chair of the Political Science Department and many faculty attend the oral defense.

¹⁴ Mission Elements 10, 18&19. (See Table 2.1.)

Fourth, we submit the Applied Research Projects for awards. Awards provide a comparative frame of reference. Since 1998 our student papers have won 11 awards. Three were the prestigious national Pi Alpha Alpha award. Carey Welebob won the Southeast Conference for Public Administration student manuscript award. The remaining 7 awards were from the Central Texas (CenTex) Chapter of ASPA.¹⁵ (See Appendix D for a list of the award winning Applied Research Projects.)

Teacher/Course Evaluations: Toward the end of each following semester, course evaluations are distributed to students in all classes. The evaluations along with a summary statement, are returned to the faculty member each semester. Teaching evaluations are discussed with the Chair during the Annual Faculty Review. Faculty are encouraged to adjust course content and format if evaluations suggest such need to occur.

Alumni Survey: In February of 2000 Cindy Cavazos (as part of her ARP) distributed an alumni survey to all alumni over the past 8 years. She used the mission elements, NASPAA standards and a previous Alumni Survey to develop her survey instrument. Formal consideration of survey findings occurred in May during the Oral Examination. The Graduate Dean, the Chair of Political Science and five faculty attended the examination. During the summer, results were shared and discussed at the Advisory Council meeting. The results indicate that the Program is doing a good job meeting its mission. (See Appendix E for selected Alumni Survey results.)

Annual Faculty Review: Each year, faculty prepare a document that highlights their goals for next year and accomplishments for the current year. In addition, last year's goals are compared with current accomplishments. Service, teaching and scholarship are the categories used for the assessment. This document stimulates professional self-assessment and reflection. Upon completion, faculty meet with the Chair of the Political Science Department for an hour. The discussion during the meeting amounts to an informal formative assessment. At that time, teaching evaluations are discussed. Likewise, progress reaching scholarship goals is examined. Discussions are frank. The process is taken seriously by all. If a faculty member's performance is consistently below standards, loss of tenure is a possibility.

Interview at Oral Exam: At the conclusion of the oral examination students are asked to give their honest impression of the program. At present, the committee asks the student to identify the program's strengths and ways that it could be improved.

MPA Program Exit Survey: After the oral exam, the students are asked to complete an exit survey. The survey included specific questions about the curriculum, how the MPA Program contributed to students' knowledge and skills. In addition several questions are specifically tied to the mission elements. (See Appendix I.)

¹⁵ The CenTex award committees included faculty from the University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs and the Texas A&M University George Bush School of Government and Public Service. Student papers from all three schools have been considered in the competition.

Employer Interviews: Employers were interviewed during the spring of 2002 to determine whether the MPA Program curriculum and graduates met employer expectations. MPA student Bruce Hermes, as part of his capstone project, conducted the survey. (See Appendix F for an abstract, conclusions and recommendations.)

Graduate Program Self-Assessment Exit Survey The Graduate College and the Office of Academic Assessment use a respected nationally designed instrument to collect assessment data. Students complete the survey as part of the process of filing for graduation. The questionnaire is comprehensive. The most recent published results are for 1997-1998. (See Appendix G.)

MPA Advisory Council: The MPA Advisory Council has been active for 12 years. The Council is composed of 19 practitioners and five students. Most of the professional members are alumni. Faculty also attend the three annual Saturday morning meetings. The Advisory Council provides both formal and informal feedback to the faculty. The Council helped us to revise the mission statement, consider admission policy, and adopt curriculum change.

Part of the MPA Program's mission refers to “professional development “and “networking” between “students” and “alumni”.¹⁶ Every Advisory Council activity supports these Mission Elements. During the July 2002 meeting of the Advisory Council, a draft report of this Self-Study was discussed.¹⁷ The Council made suggestions for change and enthusiastically endorsed the draft.

The Advisory Council also has formal subcommittees that provide assessment and sometimes even implement program improvement. The three committees are Program Trends, Mentoring and Student. Currently, the Program Trends subcommittee is working on further developing the internship program. It is expected that the internship program will grow as the first undergraduate Bachelor in Public Administration students complete their degree. Preliminary evidence suggests that many are interested in an MPA at Texas State. The Mentoring subcommittee plans mentoring events and suggests improvements for the next event. The Student subcommittee is responsible for student orientation (including assessment, recommendations, and implementation of the suggested improvements). For example, attendance at previous student orientation session was low. A new format was proposed and implemented. The student orientation time was moved to immediately after the Graduate College Orientation (Tuesday night before the fall classes began). Attendance tripled at the orientation. As with other orientations, faculty and several Advisory Council members were present at the event. (See Appendix B.)

Faculty Meetings: Faculty make program policy decisions such as curriculum or mission changes, taking into account Advisory Council opinions and assessment data during faculty meetings. While sometimes debate is intense, decisions are generally reached by consensus. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to bring any concern to faculty meetings for consideration.

¹⁶ See Mission Elements 18, 19 & 20 (See Table 2.1)

¹⁷ All council members received the draft electronically one week prior to the meeting.

Informal Technology Committee: The Political Science Chair and Drs. Weinberger and Tajalli (MPA Faculty) make up an informal technology committee. They are responsible for keeping the department/MPA Program current on technology. This committee supports the "commitment to state-of-the-art technology"¹⁸ part of the MPA mission. Over the years, this committee has been responsible for writing grants that have brought many thousands of dollars of advanced technology to the Program.

CenTex Activities: Note that part of the Texas State MPA Program mission focuses on "professional development," "networking," and "alumni involvement."¹⁹ The Texas State MPA Program uses the Central Texas (CenTex) Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration to achieve many of these mission objectives. Approximately 80% of CenTex members are Texas State alumni, faculty, or students. Approximately two thirds of the CenTex board members are faculty, students, or alumni of Texas State. (See <http://www.main.org/aspa/officers.htm> for a list of CenTex officers.)

CenTex events create opportunities for networking and professional development. Three events merit note: (1) Public Service Recognition Week Banquets; (2) The Texas ASPA Conference; and (3) the mentoring mixers. These events are assessed at board meetings. Generally, recommendations for improvement are implemented.

CenTex has won several awards from the American Society for Public Administration. The Newsletter, edited by a Texas State alumnus, has won three national awards. The Texas ASPA Conference also won an award, as did the Strategic Planning activities of the chapter. Student and former CenTex president, Bill Billingsley, won the ASPA Mode Scholarship. Professor Howard Balanoff won the prestigious, Stone Award for service to ASPA. These awards are evidence of "leadership in public service."²⁰

CenTex/Advisory Council Collaboration: Many events that promote professional growth and networking are co-sponsored by CenTex and the Texas State MPA Advisory Council. The mentoring mixer (offered at the beginning of each long semester) has drawn as many as 100 students, alumni and other professionals. The mentoring subcommittee of the Advisory Council takes the lead on organizing and assessing the mixer. CenTex pays for expenses like the hors d'oeuvres and promotes the event through its newsletter and web page. The process of collaboration works because there are three to five people that serve on both the MPA Advisory Council and the CenTex Board.

¹⁸ See Mission Element 11. (See Table 2.1.)

¹⁹ Mission Elements 3, 18, 19, 20. (See Table 2.1.)

²⁰ Mission Element 24. (See Table 2.1.)

2.3 Guiding Performance

The program shall use information about its performance in directing and revising program objectives, strategies, and operations.

A. Guiding Performance:

Using the assessment procedures discussed in Standard 2.2 ,the program engages in continuous collection of mission driven assessment data as well as deliberative, open, procedures that enable analysis and interpretation of the data. Program changes emerge from these processes.

B. Program Changes as a Result of Assessment

Curriculum Changes

- In response to faculty curriculum review and Advisory Council feedback, Political Science 5351 Seminar in American Political Institutions was eliminated as a background requirement.
- In response to faculty curriculum review and Advisory Council feedback, Political Science 5321 Problems in Federal Intergovernmental Relations was renamed Introduction to Public Policy and Administration and the course description was also changed.
- In response to alumni survey results, and discussions in the Advisory Council and faculty meetings, the faculty decided to be more explicit in applying technology across the curriculum.
- In response to a previous assessment of the small internship program (approximately 2 students an academic year), an internship notebook was developed. Students can purchase the notebook at the bookstore (\$15). All information about the internship including expectations, forms, logs, assigned research paper is contained in the notebook. The notebook is handed in at the end of the semester. The student brings the notebook to interim meetings with the instructor. This system encourages consistency given the small number of students that enroll in the internship (POSI 5370) each year.
- Assessment and implementation via the informal technology committee resulted in an expansion of the computer lab by 11 Apple G3 computers, 16 new computer desks, a laser printer, and a dedicated server. A grant successfully funded two multi-media projectors and associated computer equipment. One of the projectors is lightweight and easy to take to Austin classes.
- An employer survey identified oral presentations as an important skill that needed greater emphasis in the MPA Program. As a result, the MPA faculty plans to have a member of the Texas State Speech Communications faculty address the MPA

faculty about using and evaluating oral presentations in class.

Student Services

- In response to a faculty concern and scheduling data the number of courses offered in Austin was reduced from five to four.
- In response to a shortage of core courses offered during the summer, POSI 5330 (core course) was added to the summer schedule.
- As a result of the alumni survey the mentoring mixers were established to enhance networking opportunities.
- In response to the need to encourage diversity among students and serve Central Texas we developed a Committee Admission Process for students that failed to meet initial admissions standards. This process allows for greater input from the applicant and the faculty.
- In response to Advisory Council assessment, the student orientation format was changed.
- In response to Advisory Council assessment, a "mentor directory" was provided at the January 2000 mentoring mixer.
- Faculty and Advisory Council discussions identified a need to have better communication with students and alumni. As a result the MPA-L, MPAJOBS and MPAGRAD list serves were initiated.
- In response to trends in society, discussions in the Advisory Council, faculty meeting discussions, and changes in the mission statement (technology related), the program has greatly expanded its web presence (see <http://www.polisci.swt.edu/publicAdmin>). In addition, many faculty now have course materials on the web. There are also several items in the strategic plan that focus on enhancing our web presence.
- In response to Graduate College Exit Survey results where 48% of the respondents rated "frequency" of course offerings as "fair," the program developed and posted on the Web a course rotation schedule. This allows students to better plan.

Other changes

- In response to a formal review of our Applied Research Projects, a system to log-in projects as the bound copies arrive was implemented.
- In response to faculty concern, it was decided to offer POSI 5345, 5346 and 5347 classes in San Marcos only. These classes are technology intensive and can take advantage of the new state-of-the-art computer lab.
- The Graduate Program Self-Assessment Questionnaire (GPSA) suggested students may have some concerns about the curriculum. The GPSA data was generic and not specific to the MPA Curriculum (See Appendix G). We subsequently developed our own exit survey with program specific questions.
- The Graduate Program Self-Assessment Questionnaire (GPSA) suggested students have some concerns about the departmental procedures. We subsequently reviewed a host of procedures and implemented the list serves, new orientation format, mentoring mixers, an expanded web site, published and posting of the course rotation schedule.

3.0 PROGRAM JURISDICTION

The MPA program is part of the Political Science Department. We draw upon this discipline to inform our program. We make this connection explicit in our mission. The program is distinguished by “emphasizing management in political institutions and processes.”²¹

3.1 Administrative Organization

Effective public policy and public administrations programs may exist in several forms – sometimes as an autonomous department or school, sometimes as an accountable portion of some larger unit such as a school of administration or a department of political science. Within the framework of university organization, responsibility for the professional masters degree program in public affairs and administration should rest with an identifiable component of faculty and an administrative organization capable of conducting the program effectively. Recognizing wide variation in university structures, the intent is to achieve an appropriate focus of attention, direction, and accountability for the program without prescribing any particular form of organization.

The Master of Public Administration program at Texas State University is housed in the Department of Political Science. It is headed by a Director who reports to the Chair of the Department. The Chair reports to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, who reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The administrative structure of Texas State University as regards the MPA program is as follows:

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Robert D. Gratz

Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Ann Marie Ellis

Chair, Department of Political Science

Dr. Cynthia Opheim

Departments

Anthropology

English

Geography

History

Modern Languages

Philosophy

Political Science

Psychology

Sociology

²¹ Mission Element 21.

3.2 Recognized Program

There is a public affairs and administration program with identifiable faculty membership, whose primary responsibility for the program is recognized at the next highest level of university organization.

The internal organization of the Master of Public Administration program is as follows:

Chair

Dr. Cynthia Opheim

Director, MPA Program

Dr. Patricia M. Shields

Full-Time MPA Faculty

Dr. Howard Balanoff

Dr. Charles Garofalo

Dr. Martha Kay Hofer

Dr. Hassan Tajalli

Dr. Kenneth Ward

Dr. George Weinberger

The MPA program relates to a number of campus units, especially the Graduate College. The program's relationship with the Graduate College includes processing of student applications, requests for course variances, and certifying completion of graduation requirements. The MPA program also maintains a relationship with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs responsible for assessment, which includes completing an exit questionnaire upon filing for graduation. The MPA program incorporates the survey results into its self-assessment for purposes of planning and program development. The MPA program, finally, enjoys cordial relationships with the several departments that participate in its career support areas.

3.3 Program Administration

Responsibility for program administration is assigned to a dean, chairperson, director or other single administrator who is appointed after appropriate consultation with program faculty.

Patricia Shields, Director of the MPA program, is responsible for its administration. The MPA faculty is closely consulted on appointment of the director.

3.4 Scope of Influence

Within the framework of organization and process peculiar to the institution, the public affairs and administration faculty and/or administrator exercises initiative, and substantial determining influence with respect to: general program policy and planning; degree requirements; new courses and curriculum changes; admissions; certification of degree candidates; course scheduling and teaching assignments; use of financial and other resources; appointment, promotion, and tenuring of program faculty.

The MPA Director and faculty exercise substantial control over general program policy and planning, including curriculum, admissions, degree requirements, course scheduling, teaching assignments, and overall program direction. With regard to the use of financial and other resources, as well as appointment, promotion, and tenuring of program faculty, there is regular consultation between the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the MPA Director, and the program faculty. More specifically, for faculty appointments, search committees involving a cross-section of departmental faculty are employed, and for promotion and tenure decisions, there are senior faculty reviews and recommendations to the Chair. The MPA faculty comprise a substantial percentage of the senior departmental faculty. Finally, search committees for MPA faculty positions are always chaired by an MPA faculty member and have a majority of MPA faculty as members.

STANDARD 4.0 CURRICULUM

4.1 Purpose of Curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum shall be to prepare students for professional leadership in public service.

The curriculum is linked to both our program mission and philosophy. Several specific statements in the mission link to the curriculum. The MPA Program "prepares students for careers as managers and leaders in the public service"²² "through regular course work,"²³ "professional development,"²⁴ internships²⁵ and "applied research projects."²⁶ We are responsive to the changing public service environment through "an innovative curriculum"²⁷ that "emphasizes the central role of ethics in public service,"²⁸ "reinforces the use of technology in management,"²⁹ and emphasizes "management in political institutions and processes."³⁰ Finally the program is distinguished by "offering a variety of career support areas"³¹ and by "providing classes at convenient times and locations."³² Each of the mission elements referred to above is part of a larger organic mission statement developed in close consultation with a committed, engaged Advisory Council that includes students, alumni, and employers. There are exit survey items linked to most mission elements and NASPAA core curriculum competencies that allow us to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum to meet mission objectives. Most recently, Bruce Hermes' employer assessment linked interview questions to both NASPAA core curriculum competencies and pertinent curriculum mission elements. Further discussion of the links between the mission elements and the curriculum are found throughout this section.

As our philosophy statement notes it is "our job to help students realize their full potential in the context of public administration and management." Both exit interviews and survey data reveal an accessible faculty that is in touch with students (and thus able to help students realize their full potential). In addition, our capstone two-course sequence (POSI 5335 & 5397) provide a unique opportunity for students to "realize their

²² Mission Element 23 & 24. This is also the overall easy to repeat and remember statement that begins the program mission.

²³ Mission Element 2. (See Table 2.1.)

²⁴ Mission Element 3 (here we early on require students to join ASPA and then have an active ASPA chapter for them engage in professional activities).

²⁵ Mission Element 4.

²⁶ Mission Element 5.

²⁷ Mission Element 6. (See Table 2.1.)

²⁸ Mission Element 12. A recent graduate, Charles Matthews won the NASPAA Zuck Award for Public Courage for his work as a Texas Railroad Commissioner (statewide elected official). In his exit interview he indicated that the distinguishing feature of the Texas State MPA Program was its emphasis on ethics in every class.

²⁹ Mission Element 13.

³⁰ Mission Element 21.

³¹ Mission Element 16. (See Table 2.1.)

³² Mission Element 15.

full potential in the context of public administration and management.” This process connects them with a real world public administration problem. During the two-course sequence students are expected to define a problem, research the topic area, develop a research design, collect and analyze data, and make policy or program recommendations. This is where the student demonstrates the ability to “integrate theoretical and applied approaches to management.”³³ The Applied Research Projects document a summative experience and we believe that the quality of the final projects reflects the quality of the curriculum. Thus, our most rigorous assessment activities link to the applied research projects.

4.2 Curriculum Components

The curriculum components are designed to produce professionals capable of intelligent, creative analysis and communication, and action in public service. Courses taken to fulfill the common curriculum components shall be primarily for graduate students. Both the common and the additional curriculum components need to be assessed as to their quality and consistency with the stated mission of the program.

A. Background Information:

1. **Credit System:** The semester credit system is used.
2. **Length of Term:** The Fall and Spring semesters are fifteen weeks in length. There also are two Summer sessions of five weeks in length.
3. **Number of Terms:** There are two long semesters and one summer semester per year. The summer semester is divided into two components: (1) one ten week semester and (2) two five week semesters.
4. **Full-Time Status:** A full-time graduate student takes nine credit hours (three courses) per semester. Any student taking fewer than 9 credit hours is defined as part-time. The normal maximum for a graduate student is 15 credit hours per long semester or five courses. The full-time course load during each summer session is six hours.
5. **Time Limitation:** The MPA degree must be completed in six years.
6. **Class Contact Hours:** All graduate courses are 3 credits and every course requires a minimum of 45 contact hours.
7. **Numbering System:** The numbering system designates 1000 through 4999 as undergraduate courses; master's courses are at the 5000 level or above; doctoral courses are designated at the 7000 level.

³³ Mission Element 22.

B. Course Distribution:

The MPA degree is a 39-semester hour program consisting of a core of 30 hours including a three-hour, written applied research project and a nine-hour career support area (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Course Distribution

Course Level	Common Curriculum Components		Additional Curriculum Components	Total
	Required Prerequisites	Required Graduate		
Lower Division	0	0		
Upper Division	0	0		
Upper Div. & Graduate	0	0		
Exclusively Graduate	3 to 6*	30	9	39
Total				*39 to 45

*The course credits may total 45 hours if the three hours of prerequisites and the three credit internship are required.

C. Capable Professionals:

The core curriculum is based on competencies that have been identified by public sector practitioners, alumni, NASPAA, and the MPA Advisory Council as essential for successful performance in public organizations today. The entire curriculum stresses core knowledge and skills identified in the mission statement that MPA students must master. The combination of knowledge and skills is designed to produce capable public sector managers and professionals. Students who do not have public sector experience are required to gain capability by participation in a public service internship. These core curriculum components enhance the student's values, knowledge, ethics, and skills to perform effectively.

D. Assessment and Guiding Performance:

MPA Exit Interview: After successfully passing their oral examination each student is asked to give a candid assessment of the MPA program. Students are asked about the strengths of the program and how the MPA Program could be improved. Students generally cite the curriculum as a strength of the program. It is common for students to comment on the immediate applicability of the material covered in class to their jobs.

Capstone project assessment: Standard 2.2 contains an in depth discussion of many of the rigorous methods we use to assess the capstone projects.

There are four skills (writing, quantitative analysis, project management, and

assessment) that we explicitly want to develop in the Applied Research Project (ARP). In the exit survey 100 percent of the students agreed that the MPA Program had contributed to their skills in writing and quantitative analysis. Project management (96.9%) and assessment (93.8%) were also rated highly. The mode response in all categories was “strongly agree.”³⁴

In the Summer of 1999 Mary Gute analyzed Texas State Applied Research Projects as part of her capstone experience. She found that most (74%) ARPs dealt with State and Local government.³⁵ She also found that all ARPs used an explicit conceptual framework, 40% used survey research, 27% used content analysis and 45 % used multiple methods of observation (triangulation). Almost 70 percent used at least one form of statistical analysis. She compared Texas State with two other MPA programs in the region and found that on all criteria Texas State papers compared favorably.³⁶

Graduate Program Self-Assessment Survey The Graduate College and the Office of Academic Assessment conduct an exit survey that is administered when students apply for graduation. This 1997-1998 survey provides feedback on respondents' experiences as graduate students at Texas State. The results mirror findings generated by program surveys. Students appeared happy with the program curriculum; all respondents either strongly agreed (78%) or agreed (22%) that they had “learned a great deal as a master’s student in the program.” Likewise all respondents either “strongly agreed” (52%) or “agreed” (48%) that “the program is providing me with very good preparation for my future professional work.” An overall scale that assessed curriculum was lower than other summative measures (e.g., quality of teaching, faculty concern for students). Since the questionnaire items on the GPSA were not program specific, we developed the exit survey to capture curriculum items in more depth. (See Appendix G.)

Employer Interviews: As part of his Applied Research Project, Bruce Hermes did an employer assessment of the MPA Program.³⁷ Because the literature revealed that employer surveys are systematically biased, Bruce did targeted interviews with selected local area employers. He discovered that employers value the MPA Core curriculum. He tied many of his interview questions to the program mission. He found that the mission is consistent with employer

³⁴ The “strongly agree” response was 91% for writing, 72% for quantitative analysis, 66% for project management and 60% for assessment.

³⁵ This is consistent with our regional mission (Mission Element 1).

³⁶ See Mary Gute, “A Comparison of Master level research projects in Public Administration and Public Affairs Programs in Central Texas.” Applied Research Project, Southwest Texas State University, 1999. In 1997 Ana Almeguel performed an earlier analysis of Texas State Applied Research Projects. Mary also compared Texas State Applied research projects over time and found that they improved. In the comparison of capstone projects of other institutions found that the majority other papers did not have an explicit methodology or use of statistics.

³⁷ See Bruce Hermes “Government Employer Assessment of the Texas State MPA” Applied Research Project. Southwest Texas State University, Spring 2002.

expectations. Finally, he found that the Texas State, MPA program, and its graduates are held in high regard (See Appendix F).

An MPA Exit Survey is given to all students after they complete their oral examination. The Exit Survey is indexed to the MPA mission statement and covers the following areas: decision making and problem solving; financial administration; human resource administration; the policy process; intergovernmental relations; ethics; information systems/ technology; public management; organizational theory and application; law; and applied research. (See Tables 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 for the complete results.)

The overall exit survey picture is very strong. All items on the exit survey indicate a positive assessment on every aspect of the program. The MPA Program is relatively stronger on the "knowledge" rather than on the "skills" component of the survey. The "knowledge" items correspond fairly closely to the curriculum; the "skills" items were exploratory. The program scored well on items that have been included in the mission for the last few years.

The results of the most recent exit survey (n=32) indicated that 71.9 percent "strongly agreed" and 28.1 percent "agreed" that the MPA Program "prepares students for careers as *managers* in public service" (100 % agreement). In addition, 65.6 % "strongly agreed" and 34.4 percent "agreed" that the MPA Program "prepared students for careers as *leaders* in the public service"³⁸ (100% agreement). (See Tables 5.6, 5.7, & 5.8 for more detailed information on the exit survey.)

Alumni Survey: As part of her Applied Research Project Cindy Cavazos sent surveys to 149 individuals that had graduated between 1991 and 1999. There were 91 surveys returned (61% response rate). The results of the alumni survey were also strong. For example, 75% felt that the program did a "good" or "excellent" job of preparing students for management in public service. The percentage was 73% for leadership preparation.⁴⁰ Alumni were also asked about the knowledge areas covered by the program. The mode response was "good."

There were several mission related curriculum questions on the survey. These were "program offers an innovative curriculum," the "curriculum offers a balance between theoretical and applied approaches," and "ethics played a central role." The overall results suggest that the MPA Program meets these objectives. We also wanted to see if there would be a difference in responses among students that had graduated before and after the mission had been adopted. The results for the "innovative curriculum" (89% of the post mission alumni agreed or strongly

³⁸ Mission Element 23 (See Table 2.1)

³⁹ Mission Element 24

⁴⁰ We believe that the mission process has had an effect on the quality of instruction. The mission statement and awareness of the mission began in 1998. Most graduates surveyed graduated before the current mission was initiated.

agreed the program offered an innovative curriculum). This compared with 60.2% for students that graduated before the program mission was adopted. There was also an increase in the percent of students that agreed (or strongly agreed) that the curriculum balanced the theoretical and applied. (See Appendix E)

E. Graduate Classes:

Courses taken to fulfill the common curriculum components are primarily for graduate students. While a few courses are stacked and include undergraduates in the class, the requirements for the graduate students are all at the graduate level and consistent with the non-stacked courses.

F. Required Prerequisites:

All MPA students must have completed an undergraduate statistics class with a grade of B or better. If not, they must complete a statistics background requirement. Students may fulfill this requirement by either enrolling in POSI 5303 or an equivalent undergraduate (3 hour) statistics class. Students are encouraged to take POSI 5303 and over 90 percent of the students fulfill their statistics background requirement by completing POSI 5303. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the statistics requirement prior to enrolling in POSI 5334, 5335, or 5343.

Students who do not have public sector experience must take POSI 5370, Internship in Government, in the first 24 hours. Students without public sector work experience often get public sector jobs prior to completing 24 hours. In these cases, the employment is documented (after 6 months) and the internship waived. On a case-by-case basis the program director may require a technical writing class when there is evidence that an applicant has weak writing skills. The verbal score on the GRE and the transcript are used to make this judgment.

4.21 Common Curriculum Components

The common curriculum components shall enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively:

– In the Management of Public Service Organizations, the components of which include: Human resources; Budgeting and financial processes; Information, including computer literacy and applications.

– In the Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis, the components of which include: Policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation; Decision-making and problem-solving.

– With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, the components of which include: Political and legal institutions and processes; Economic and social institutions and processes; Organization and management concepts and behavior.

These area requirements do not prescribe specific courses. Neither do they imply that equal time should be spent on each area or that courses must all be offered by the public affairs, public policy or public administration programs. Nor should they be interpreted in a manner that might impede the development of special strengths in each program.

A. Required Graduate Courses

(3 credits each).

POSI 5314	Organization Theory
POSI 5315	Problems in Public Personnel Administration
POSI 5311	Public Finance Administration
POSI 5318	Public Management and Ethics
POSI 5321	Problems in Federal Intergovernmental Relations ⁴¹
POSI 5330	Problems in Public Law
POSI 5334	Problems in Quantitative Analysis
POSI 5335	Problems in Research Methodology
POSI 5397	Applied Research Project and

One course from POSI 5340, POSI 5341, or POSI 5343

POSI 5340	Problems in American Public Policy
POSI 5341	Seminar in the Policy Process
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation

A total of thirty credit hours are required. These courses cannot be waived. Under rare conditions, up to two courses taken at another university may be substituted for a required course. Students are required to provide course descriptions from the official graduate catalogue; the program director and Graduate College evaluate the substitutability of the course. The core courses cover most components of the mission of the program.

Course substitutions occur on occasion. The most common reason for course substitution is if a required course does not make and the student is close to graduating. Under these conditions a student may take an independent study (POSI 5398) that covers the equivalent material under the direction of the faculty member responsible for the class. An independent study course form that documents the content of the class is retained in the student files.

⁴¹ In May of 2002 (and effective Fall 2002) this course name was changed to "Introduction to Public Policy and Administration." The description was changed to "an introduction to the policy and administration institutional environment with a special emphasis on intergovernmental relations in the federal system."

Often the classes actually meet under the independent study number (POSI 5398). This occurs when the enrollment was close to the required number.⁴²

During the self-study year, the MPA Program made a significant scheduling error. We neglected to find an adjunct to fill POSI 5321 (Intergovernmental Relations). In addition, the summer prior the class did not make. As a result many students would have been unable to graduate in a timely manner. Because it was our mistake, students were allowed to substitute other related courses for the Intergovernmental Relations class.⁴³ In addition, we justified this decision because through the Alumni survey, discussions at the advisory board and exit interviews, the MPA Program was in the process of changing the content and title of that course (POSI 5321).

Partly due to the scheduling problem POSI 5321 was overbooked in the Summer of 2002. As a result we allowed students to substitute POSI 5319 Seminar in Constitutional Law and Theory for POSI 5321. The course was taught by Professor Ward (faculty nucleus) and emphasized aspects of intergovernmental relations.

B. Ethical Action:

POSI 5318, "Public Management and Ethics," is a strong course that focuses on ethics in the public sector. As this course is part of the core curriculum, all students are introduced to in-depth ethical studies and issues. Exit survey results revealed that 97 percent of the students either strongly agreed (75%) or agreed (22%) that the MPA Program contributed to their knowledge of ethics.

⁴² George Weinberger's fall 2002 GIS course did not make. The substituted POSI 5398 class met at the designated time each week and covered the exact material that it would have had it been designated POSI 5346.

⁴³ We feel this decision is consistent with our program philosophy "students and their welfare have a high priority."

C. Curriculum Coverage:

Table 4.2
Curriculum Coverage

	Human Re- sources	Budget & finance Processes	Infor-mation & computer literacy	Policy & Program formulationI mplemeta- tion & evaluation	Decision making & problem solving	Political & legal Institutions & Processes	Economic & Social Instituts & Processes	Org and Manag concepts & processes
Public Finance		X	X		X		X	
Org Theory 5314								X
Personnel 5315	x							
Ethics 5318	x			X	X			
Intergov Relations 5321		X				X	X	
Public Law 5330	x				X	X		
Quant Analysis 5334			X		X			
Research methods 5335				X	X			
Applied Research 5397	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Problems in Policy 5340				X		X		
Policy Process 5341				X		X	X	
Program Eval 5343			X	X	X			

The MPA Program curriculum is divided between a relatively large core (10 courses) and a smaller (3 course) career support area (see Standard 4.22). The core courses provide students with a broad understanding of the theoretical underpinning and practices of public administration (i.e., finance, personnel, organization theory, public law, ethics). This is consistent with the management focus of our mission. Students are required to take one policy course (out of a choice of three POSI 5340, 5342 or 5343). Table 4.2 demonstrates how the curriculum incorporates 1) the management of public service organizations; 2) the application of quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis; and 3) an understanding of the public policy and organizational environment.

Our mission claims that we “respond to the changing environment through an innovative curriculum.”⁴⁴ One of the unique innovations of our curriculum is the emphasis on research methods (9 hours including the ARP). We believe that research methods (quantitative and qualitative) provide students with skills that make them more effective public administrators immediately and through out their careers (by making them independent learners). Further the two-course capstone sequence provides a process that produces high quality research (awards).⁴⁵ The curriculum is consistent with NASPAA guidelines it also meets students and employer expectations of what graduate education in public administration should include. And, thus, "prepares students for careers as managers and leaders in public service."⁴⁶

4.22 Additional Curriculum Components

Each program shall clearly define its objectives for additional work and the rationale for the objectives, and shall explain how the curriculum is designed to achieve those objectives. The statement of objectives shall include any program specializations or concentrations and the main categories of students to be served (e.g., pre-service, in-service, full-time, part-time).

If a program advertises its ability to provide preparation for a specialization or concentration in its catalog, bulletin, brochures, and/or posters, evidence shall be given that key courses in the specialization or concentration are offered on a regular basis by qualified faculty. Specialization or concentration courses may be offered by units other than the public affairs or administration program. The specialization and concentration courses shall not be substitutes for the common curriculum components.

According to the mission statement, the MPA "Program is distinguished by offering a variety of career support areas."⁴⁷ The variety of the career support areas enables us to offer an “innovative curriculum.”⁴⁸ The program meets this mission objective through career support areas in:

⁴⁴ Mission Element 6. (See Table 2.1.)

⁴⁵ See Shields, Patricia. "Getting Organized: A Pragmatic Tool for Writing Graduate Papers," *Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development*. Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 5-17 (1999) and Shields, Patricia. "Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Science: A Tool for Public Administration." in *Research in Public Administration* Vol. 4., edited by Jay White. (JAI Press: Stamford, CT): 195-225. (1998) for two articles that describe aspects of the two course capstone process. These articles provide further evidence of the “innovative” nature of the curriculum.

⁴⁶ Mission Element 23 & 24. Evidence from employer survey.

⁴⁷ Mission Element 16.

⁴⁸ Mission Element 6.

- Administration of Allied Health Services
- Administration of Criminal Justice Systems
- Human Resources Administration
- International Relations
- Legal and Judicial Administration
- Public Finance Administration
- Public Personnel Administration
- Urban Planning
- Government Information Systems
- General Public Administration

All Career Support Areas are nine hours. The specialization courses cannot be substituted for the common curriculum components.

A. Elective Design:

The curriculum components of the career support areas are designed to meet several possible objectives. For example, the Public Personnel Administration, Public Finance Administration, Legal and Judicial Administration and Government Information System Career support areas are designed to enhance skills specific to the level or type of employment expected. Other career support areas are policy specific (Criminal Justice, International Relations, Health Care). In these cases, students deepen their understanding of a specific policy area because they work in that area or, if pre-service, are interested in employment in the area. A nine-hour career support curriculum component is required.

For some career support areas, students may select the nine credits from a list of courses approved for the career support areas. For other career support areas, the nine hours are prescribed. The construction of the career support areas allows for broad advanced training or specialization.

B. Elective Courses for Broad Advanced Training:

MPA students that seek broad advanced training choose the General Public Administration Career Support Area. In the advanced elective area, there are no courses open to undergraduate students. All courses are at the graduate level. The General Public Administration Career Support Area is the most popular career support area. In the self study year, 75 students chose General Public Administration. This career support area takes advantage of the strengths of the Political Science Department. It is also consistent with our mission that “emphasizes management in political institutions and processes.”⁴⁹

The general public administration career support area ties to our mission in several ways.

⁴⁹ Mission Element 21 (See Table 2.1)

A resounding strength of the program mentioned by students at the exit interview is the accessibility of the courses. We included accessibility in our mission - “delivering classes at convenient times and location.”⁵⁰ The General Public Administration Career support area is the most flexible career support area. In addition, it ties to the mission by emphasizing technology and information systems⁵¹.

GENERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CAREER SUPPORT AREA

Students must choose three hours from a governmental information systems course:

POSI 5345	Conceptual Foundations of Gov. Information Systems
POSI 5346	Technology of Governmental Information Systems
POSI 5347	Public Finance Information Systems

Two of the following courses may be selected as electives for the General Public Administration specialization. Students may choose from graduate courses offered by the MPA Program as well as the graduate programs in Political Science and Legal Studies. The courses link to the mission through "emphasizing management in political institutions and processes" and "integrating theoretical and applied approaches to public management."⁵²

Courses listed below are taught by Public Administration Faculty and are the courses most often chosen in the General Public Administration Career Support Area.

POSI 5312	Public Sector Economics
POSI 5316	Labor-Management Relations
POSI 5317	Management Practices in Public Personnel Administration
POSI 5333	Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity
POSI 5340	Problems in American Public Policy
POSI 5341	Seminar in the Policy Process
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation
POSI 5345	Conceptual Foundations of Gov. Information Systems
POSI 5346	Technology of Government Information Systems
POSI 5347	Public Finance Information Systems
POSI 5375	International and Comparative Public Administration

The Political Science Faculty as part of the Master of Political Science teaches the following courses. The international courses are most popular among MPA students.

POSI 5301	Problems in American and Foreign Relations
POSI 5303	Political Methodology and Research
POSI 5319	Seminar in Constitutional Law and Theory
POSI 5325	Roots of American Constitutionalism

⁵⁰ Mission Element 15.

⁵¹ "Reinforcing the use of technology in management" (Mission Element 13) and "a commitment to state-of-the-art technology (Mission Element 11).

⁵² Mission Element 21 and 22.

POSI 5327	Topics in State and Local Government
POSI 5350	Problems in American Politics
POSI 5360	Problems in International Politics
POSI 5364	Problems in International Organizations
POSI 5365	Problems in International Law
POSI 5380	Problems in the International Political Economy
POSI 5382	Seminar in International Relations Theory
POSI 5385	Topics in Third World Politics
POSI 5398	Directed Reading and Research

Courses listed below are taught by the Legal Studies Faculty as part of a Master of Arts with a major in Legal Studies.

POSI 5376	Alternative Dispute Resolution
POSI 5377	Criminal Law and Procedure
POSI 5378	Social Legislation
POSI 5379	Legal Drafting
POSI 5386	Legal Theories and Analysis
POSI 5387	Legal Research
POSI 5391	Family Law
POSI 5394	Litigation

The Majority of the courses listed above form the more specialized Career Support Areas. Course descriptions, times offered, professors responsible for teaching are found in the next section.

C. Elective Courses for Specializations:

The MPA program offers nine specialized Career Support Areas, each consisting of three courses for a total of nine semester credit hours. Five Career Support Areas are comprised of primarily political science/public administration courses, and four include courses primarily from other departments.

The five departmental Career Support Areas are:

- Government Information Systems
- Public Finance Administration
- International Relations
- Legal and Judicial Administration
- Public Personnel Administration

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

To fulfill the Government Information Systems Career Support area requirements students must take the following three credit courses. Students that take this career support area want to deepen their understanding of the role of technology and information systems in the public sector. POSI 5345 is a study of the theoretical

assumptions, conceptual foundations, and design of government information systems. POSI 5346 is the study of the technological foundations and implications of computer-based government information systems. POSI 5347 considers the advanced theory and applications of computer-based financial information systems, systems analysis and design, hardware configurations and software attributes.

Table 4.3
Government Information Systems Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5345	Conceptual Foundations of Governmental Information Systems	Weinberger	Rotates every fourth semester
POSI 5346	Technology of Governmental Information Systems	Weinberger	Rotates every fourth semester
POSI 5347	Public Finance Information Systems	Weinberger	Rotates every fourth semester

Total students in self study year =7

PUBLIC FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

To fulfill the Public Finance Administration Career Support area requirements students must take the following three credit courses. This career support area in combination with the core class, POSI 5311 Public Finance Administration, provides students with the substantive knowledge and skills needed to navigate public sector financial systems. The economic theories, policies, and institutions that underlie our finance system are provided in POSI 5312. Students learn about financial decision-making in Program Evaluation (POSI 5343) and how the finance system ties to government information systems in Public Finance Information Systems (POSI 5347).

Table 4.4
Public Finance Administration Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5312	Public Sector Economics	Tajalli, Richards, Shields	Every other odd summer
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli Shields	Every fall semester
POSI 5347	Public Finance Information Systems	Weinberger	Rotates every fourth semester

Total students in self study year = 4

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IR)

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below to fulfill the requirements of the International Relations Career Support area. The IR Career Support Area takes advantage of the strong Political Science Department expertise in

International Relations. It is an example of the “innovative curriculum”⁵³ that we discuss in the mission statement. In addition, students of all walks of life are attracted to this career support area. Most realize that public administration operates in a global environment and they want to enhance their understanding. We have a small group of students that are affiliated with the Armed Forces.⁵⁴ Courses in international relations are interesting for obvious reasons. It should be noted that Texas borders Mexico and is a gateway to South and Central America. Texas state government operates in an international environment and if we are to “serve the diverse community that is Central Texas”⁵⁵ we need to offer our students a way to learn more about the international environment.

Table 4.5
International Relations Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5301	Problems in American Foreign Relations	Leder	Even Spring
POSI 5360	Problems in International Politics	Gorman	Even Summer
POSI 53 64	Problems in International Organizations	Gorman	Odd Fall
POSI 5365	Problems in International Law	Gorman	Even Spring
POSI 5375	International Comparative Public Administration	Balanoff	Every third year and by extension when a trip is scheduled (between semesters).
POSI 5380	Economic and Social Problems of International Relations	DeRouen	Odd Spring
POSI 5384	Topics in Modern Democratic Systems	Sullivan Hindson	Odd Spring
POSI 5385	Topics in World Politics	Mihalkanin	Odd Summer

Total number of students in self study year =4

LEGAL AND JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below. The legal career support area takes advantage of the faculty in the Political Science Department’s Legal Studies master of arts program.⁵⁶ It is an example of the innovative curriculum”⁵⁷ that we discuss in the mission statement. In addition, students of all walks of life are attracted to this career support area. Public administration operates in a legal environment and students in this career support area want to enhance their ability to understand and communicate in the legal environment.

⁵³ Mission Element 6. (See Table 2.1.)

⁵⁴ Fort Hood (the largest Army base in the U.S.) is in Killeen Texas and part of the Central Texas region that we serve.

⁵⁵ Mission Element 1.

⁵⁶ This program also offers a certificate for paralegals that is accredited by the American Bar Association. The courses emphasize the applied aspects of the law, which is consistent with our mission.

⁵⁷ Mission Element 6

Table 4.6
Legal and Judicial Administration Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5319	Seminar in Law and Constitutional Theory	Ward	Even Summer
POSI 5387	Legal Research	Wright Hindera	Fall and Spring
POSI 53 79	Legal Drafting	Hull	Fall and Spring
POSI 5390	Administrative Law	Blucher Miller	Every other year
POSI 5394	Litigation	Brittain	Summer and Fall
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli Shields	Every Fall

Total number of students in the self study year = 6

PUBLIC PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below. The personnel career support area in combination with the core class, POSI 5315 Problems in Public Personnel Administration, provides students with the substantive knowledge and skills needed to navigate personnel policies and practices in the public sector. This career support area reinforces the “management” focus in our mission. PA generalists are attracted to this career support area because they want to be more effective in dealing with the personnel issues that face every public manager. It is also popular among students interested in careers in human resource administration.

Table 4.7
Public Personnel Administration Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5316	Collective Bargaining in the Public Service	Balanoff	Every odd summer
POSI 5317	Management Practices in Public Personnel Administration	Balanoff	Every even summer
SOC 5319	Seminar in Social Psychology	Darton	Even spring
POSI 5345	Conceptual Foundation of Government Information Systems	Weinberger	Every Fourth semester
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli Shields	Every Fall

Total number of students in the self study year = 3

INTERDEPARTMENTAL CAREER SUPPORT AREAS

The four inter-departmental Career Support Areas are:

- Administration of Allied Health Services,
- Administration of Criminal Justice Systems
- Human Resources Administration,
- Urban Planning.

ADMINISTRATION OF ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below. The health career support area takes advantage of the Texas State's related health administration programs. It is an example of the "innovative curriculum"⁵⁸ that we discuss in the mission statement. Courses were chosen from the Health Administration and Health Human Resources course inventory. These courses supplement and complement the courses in the MPA core. MPA students working in a health related fields generally take advantage of this career support area.

Table 4.8
Administration of Allied Health Services Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
HA 5304	Financial Planning	Nowicki	Fall
HA 5321	Medical Jurisprudence	Renick	Fall
HA 5346	Health Planning	Summers	Fall
HA 5354	Health Care Organization and Delivery	Sorensen	Spring
HHR5307	Public Relations in Health Care	Pate	Fall
HHR 5322	Human Resource Development in Health Services	Vardiman	Fall
HHR 5350	Human Resource Management in Health Services	Vardiman	Spring
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli	Fall

Total number of students in the self-study year = 5

ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS (CJ)

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below. The CJ career support area takes advantage of the Texas State's graduate program in Criminal Justice. It is an example of the "innovative curriculum"⁵⁹ that we discuss in the mission statement. These courses supplement and complement the courses in the MPA core. MPA students working in a criminal justice field generally take advantage of this career support area.

⁵⁸ Mission Element 6.

⁵⁹ Mission Element 6.

Table 4.9
Criminal Justice Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
CJ 5310	Administration of Justice	Pollick Salinas	Fall and Summer
CJ 5311	Administrative Law in Criminal Justice		
CJ 5315	Advanced Research Methods in Criminal Justice	Stone	Spring
CJ 5320	History and Philosophy of Justice	Jaieson	Fall
CJ 5321	Current Legal Issues in Criminal Justice	Pollock	Fall
CJ 5325	Statistics for Criminal Justice	Mullins	Fall
CJ 5330	Management Principles in Criminal Justice	Spencer	Spring
CJ 5340	Personnel Practices in Criminal Justice	Musslin	Spring
CJ5350	Current Issues in Criminal Justice	Thurman	Spring
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli	Fall

Total number of students in the self-study year = 4

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION (HR)

Table 4.10
Human Resource Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
SOC 5316	Seminar in Deviation and Social Problems	Day Johnson	Odd Summer
SOC 5320	Seminar in Demography	Majumdar	Spring
SOC 5343	Seminar in Criminology	Day	
SOC 5353	Seminar in the Community	Caldwell	Fall
SOC 5363	Seminar in Medical Sociology	Anderson	Odd Fall
SOC 5370	Seminar in Multi-Cultural Relations	Anderson	Summer
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli	Fall
COMM 5319	Organizational Communication	Salem	Spring

Total number of students in the self-study year = 7

URBAN PLANNING

Students choose three courses (9 semester hours) from the list below. The Urban Planning Career Support takes advantage of the Texas State's Planning and Geography faculty expertise. It is an example of the "innovative curriculum"⁶⁰ that we discuss in the

⁶⁰ Mission Element 6.

mission statement. These courses supplement and complement the courses in the MPA core. MPA students working in an urban setting or planning related fields generally take advantage of this career support area.

Table 4.11
Urban Planning Career Support Area

Course number	Course title	Faculty	Offered
POSI 5333	Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity	Balanoff	Summer
GEO 5312	The Planning Function and Process		
GEO 5313	Environmental Management	Earl	Fall
GEO 5314	Geographic Elements of Environmental Law	Colten	Spring
GEO 5336	Transportation System	Zhan	Spring
GEO 5339	Land Development and Management		
GEO 5351	Regional Waste Management	Larson	Fall
GEO 5408	Applied Cartography (when taught as Geographic Information Systems)	Macey	Fall
GEO 5323	Location Analysis	Harrison	Spring -
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation	Tajalli	Each fall semester

Total number of students in the self-study year = 7

4.23 General Competencies

The common and additional curriculum components shall develop in students general competencies that are consistent with the program mission.

Competencies: A total of 30 credit hours are required courses. These courses cannot be waived. Under rare conditions, up to two courses taken at another university may be substituted for a required course. Students are required to provide course descriptions from the official graduate catalogue; the program director and graduate school evaluate the substitutability of the course. The core courses cover most components of the mission of the program. In rare circumstances, however, it may be possible for a student to complete the core and support courses with one or no courses in advanced computer technology.

The mission of the MPA program includes the preparation of managers and leaders for public service. Accordingly, the competencies developed by the courses and additional curriculum components include knowledge, skills, and abilities in public leadership and management, an appreciation of the value and legal dimensions of public management and public policy, and an understanding of human resources, fiscal, and intergovernmental issues related to public administration. In addition, the MPA program provides opportunities for students to develop specialized knowledge and skills in one of nine concentrations, which are offered on both a departmental and inter-departmental basis.

4.3 Minimum Degree Requirements

A. Degree Credit Hours:

The minimum number of graduate credits required for the Texas State MPA degree is 39 hours. In many cases additional hours of statistics coursework (POSI 5303), and an internship (POSI 5370) are required. There is no reduction in the credit hours for undergraduate preparation. In the event a student does not have prior public service experience, a three hour internship may be required. The internship is in addition to the regular coursework.

B. Degree Length:

The usual time to complete the MPA program is two calendar years, although the Graduate College policy allows six years for completion. Students may elect to take courses in the Summer term, but they will still normally take about two years to finish their MPA degree. After coursework is completed, students will normally take one semester to complete their applied research project.

Time to Complete with Strong Undergraduate Preparation

The time required to complete the degree is the same whether the student has strong undergraduate preparation or not. Students with strong undergraduate preparation do not have to take the prerequisite statistics course, but they must still complete the 39-hour MPA degree.

Time to Complete Degree with Professional Experience

The time required to complete the degree is the same whether the student has significant professional experience or not. Students with significant professional experience do not have to take the internship course, but they must still complete the 39 hour MPA degree program.

C. Concluding Requirements:

All students are required to complete an applied research project that is supervised by the Director. The project is considered as a class and counts as three hours toward the degree requirement. An oral comprehensive examination of one hour in length over the applied research project is required.

D. Course Formats:

MPA courses are rotated on a regular basis and are scheduled so that required core courses are not offered on the same evenings. Classes are available in Austin as well as in San Marcos. The classes are all evening classes with the exception of several that are taught via the Internet. Classes normally meet once a week on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 6:30 until 9:15 p.m. during the two long

semesters and two evenings a week (TTH or MW) from 6:15 to 10:00 p.m. during the summer sessions.

Student Transcript Analysis

Core Courses (30 hours)

POSI 5314	Organization Theory
POSI 5315	Problems in Public Personnel Administration
POSI 5311	Public Finance Administration
POSI 5318	Public Management and Ethics
POSI 5321	Problems in Federal Intergovernmental Relations ⁶¹
POSI 5330	Problems in Public Law
POSI 5334	Problems in Quantitative Analysis
POSI 5335	Problems in Research Methodology
POSI 5397	Applied Research Project and

One course from POSI 5340, POSI 5341, or POSI 5343

POSI 5340	Problems in American Public Policy
POSI 5341	Seminar in the Policy Process
POSI 5343	Seminar in Program Evaluation

Career Support Course (9 hours)

Courses offered under the career support area are listed in section 4.22.

- B. POSI 5398 - Directed Reading and Research, is designed to allow students to do research on a specific topic under the direction of a graduate faculty member. This course may be repeated once with different emphasis and professor for additional credit. Under some circumstances, the Director may allow a student to substitute POSI 5398 for another course when it can be justified. This may occur if the student wants to do more in depth research on a topic related to the course. Also, if there are not enough students enrolled in a course for the course to be justified, the course is assigned
POSI 5398 course number.
- C. Substitutions - Occasionally, the Director will allow a student to substitute one class for another. This may occur if a class is full and another class will fulfill the

⁶¹ In May of 2002 (and effective Fall 2002) this course name was changed to "Introduction to Public Policy and Administration." The description was changed to "an introduction to the policy and administration institutional environment with a special emphasis on intergovernmental relations in the federal system."

requirements or student has transferred a course covering the same material from another institution.

Table 4.12
Student Transcript Analysis

POSI Core Course #	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	S
5311	B	B	A	A	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	A	A	B	A
5314	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	*	*	A	A	A	A	B	A
5315	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	A	A	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
5318	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	A
5321	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	*	*	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	*
5330	B	B	A	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	*	A
5334	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	B	B	A	A	**	A	A	A	*
5335	B	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	A
5397	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A
Choose 1																				
5340	A	A					A	A					A							
5341			B	A		A					A	A			B		C		**	
5343					C				B	A				B		A		A		A
*5398											A	A	B	B					B	A A
**Sub .																A			A	
Career Support																				
1	A	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2	B	A	B	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A
3	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A

*Independent Study

** Course Substitution

NOTE THIS TABLE HAS AN ERROR. EACH CAREER SUPPORT AREA COURSE SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED AND THE GRADE FOR THE COURSE LISTED

4.4 Internships

A. Internship Design:

The purpose of the internship is to provide students who have no prior organizational experience with the opportunity to participate in the operations of a public or non-profit agency. The internship is a way for the student to link theory and practice and to relate, through a research project and a journal, the particular organizational setting to relevant academic literature.

B. Internship Status:

The internship is required for pre-service students, although it is available to any interested MPA students. Typically, a student does an internship about halfway through the program or later, in order to make the selection of the internship site and the overall experience as meaningful as possible, especially in terms of the student's career goals.

C. Internship Supervision:

The internship consists of a 300-hour commitment, which usually means 20 hours a week for 15 weeks. The internship is over and above the required number of hours for the core curriculum and career support area and may not substitute for a course in either component. It carries three hours of academic credit on the standard grading scale, A-F. The grade is determined on the basis of the student's research project and the supervisor's evaluation. Dr. Patricia Parent, the undergraduate internship advisor, is responsible for placement. The MPA Director holds the internship (POSI 5370) roster and is responsible for grading.

The internship is integrated into the curriculum in essentially two ways: a) through the application of internship-induced insights to courses, b) through the knowledge developed in the internship paper.

Interns are monitored by the MPA Director and are supervised by a designated agency representative. Dr. Parent (undergraduate internship advisor) is notified of a student's interests prior to the semester they register.

Regular site visits are not required. Depending on circumstances, there are sometimes telephone conversations between the student's supervisor and the MPA Director, and the Director discusses the progress of the internship with the student during the semester. The criteria for matching students with internships include student interest, career aims, and appropriate agency availability.

D. Internship Placement:

Table 4.13
Internship Placement

Year	Name	Placement
2002	Steve Spacek	Texas Office of Consumer Credit Commission
2000	Brad Schley	Secret Service*
2000	Joseph Michael	Lobbying Firm (Chuck Rice)
2000	Rayana Gonzales	Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
1999	Mary McIntosh	Southwest Texas State University Bookstore
1999	Gary Jaime	Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
1999	Diane Rhodes	Texas Legislature
1999	Olga Shroeder	Texas Legislature

*Brad is not an MPA student. He is a graduate student in Criminal Justice.

STANDARD 5.0--THE FACULTY

Faculty and Mission: As stated in the MPA Program philosophy "our goal is an accessible faculty who promote an educational community with a generous spirit where people learn from each other both in and out of the classroom."⁶² This is reflected in the mission statement. "The program is distinguished by rich and frequent contact between students and faculty."⁶³ Evidence from exit surveys show we are achieving this goal. Ninety seven percent of the students agreed that there was "rich and frequent contact between faculty and students" (69% strongly agreeing with this statement). Thus, first and foremost, our faculty is accessible. Our mission also states that we "emphasize management in political institutions and processes."⁶⁴ This draws on our roots as a Political Science Department and on the background of three faculty (Hofer, Tajalli and Ward). All have Ph.D.'s in Political Science.

Faculty service itself is part of the mission.⁶⁵ MPA faculty service also reinforces other facets of the mission. Drs. Balanoff and Shields both serve on the Board of Centex ASPA. This is a "link to professional associations and organizations."⁶⁶ This service also results in out of class activities such as mentoring mixers, awards banquets, and Texas ASPA Conferences. These activities provide "students" and "alumni" with "professional networking activities."⁶⁷ Dr. Weinberger's service activity, as the department's technology administrator, ensures the program's "commitment to state of the art technology."⁶⁸ Dr. Garofalo's service (Institutional Review Board) and scholarship (noted ethics scholar) reinforce our "emphasis on the central role of ethics in public service."⁶⁹ Our applied approach⁷⁰ is evidenced in the scholarship of our faculty. Finally, three of our faculty (Balanoff, Tajalli, and Shields) have won regional teaching awards. We believe this is evidence of faculty quality.

5.1 Faculty Nucleus

There must be a faculty nucleus that accepts primary responsibility for the professional graduate program. This regular faculty should consist of a sufficient number of full-time

⁶² See Self Study Standard 2.1B.

⁶³ Mission Element 17.

⁶⁴ Mission Element 21.

⁶⁵ Mission Element 8.

⁶⁶ Mission Element 9.

⁶⁷ Mission Elements 18 & 19. Note that many of these activities are co-sponsored with the MPA Advisory Council. Generally 5 or 6 faculty attend Advisory Council activities and 3 or 4 faculty are at Mentoring Mixers, Texas ASPA Conferences and Awards Banquets. Most faculty attend the new student orientation at the beginning of each academic year. This is additional service that reinforces accessibility and professional networking. These activities also support mission element 20 (the programs focus on continued professional development). Since both the CenTex ASPA board and the Advisory Council are filled with practitioners this indirectly provides "interaction with governmental agencies" (Mission element 10). Dr. Balanoff's leadership in the Certified Public Managers Program also reinforces these mission elements.

⁶⁸ Mission Element 13.

⁶⁹ Mission Element 12.

⁷⁰ Mission Element 22. "The program is distinguished by integrating theoretical and *applied* approaches to public management."

faculty significantly involved with the program to support the set of teaching, research and service responsibilities appropriate to the size and structure of the program. In no case should this faculty nucleus be fewer than five (5) full- time persons. The institution should specify how each regular faculty member is involved in the teaching and related research and service aspects of the program. At least 50 percent of the courses offered in the curriculum as well as at least 50 percent of the courses covering the common curriculum components shall be taught by full-time faculty in the institution.

A. Critical Mass:

During the self-study year, our MPA program had 7 full-time faculty members who were significantly involved in the teaching and operation of the master's program. Dr. Ken Ward and Dr. Hassan Tajalli are both tenure-track assistant professors. The remaining full-time faculty members are tenured professors. For the most part, the full-time core faculty teach all MPA courses. Part-time faculty are hired on an ad hoc basis to help out teaching some courses.

B. Faculty Nucelus

TABLE 5.1
FACULTY NUCLEUS

Name	Rank &Title	Tenure Status	Administrative Unit	Degree & Field
Balanoff, Howard	Professor	Tenured	Political Science	DED Environmental Design
Garofalo, Charles	Professor	Tenured	Political Science	Ph.D. American Studies
Hofer, Kay	Professor	Tenured	Political Science	Ph.D. Political Science
Shields, Patricia	Professor, Director	Tenured	Political Science	Ph.D. Public Administration
Tajalli, Hassan	Assistant Professor	Tenure Track	Political Science	Ph.D. Political Science
Ward, Kenneth	Assistant Professor	Tenure Track	Political Science	Ph.D. Political Science JD Law
Weinberger, George	Professor	Tenured	Political Science	DPA Public Administration

C. Teaching Assignments

Table 5.2
Courses Taught by Faculty Nucleus

Name of Faculty	Academic Year	Course#	Course Credits	Title
Balanoff, Howard	2000-2001	5314	3	Organization Theory
		5315	3	Personnel Administration
		5316	3	Labor Relations
		5333	3	Ecology
		5375	3	Comparative Public Administration
	2001-2002	5314	3	Organization Theory
		5315	3	Personnel Administration
		5316	3	Labor Relations
		5333	3	Ecology
		5375	3	Comparative Public Administration
Garofalo, Charles	2000-2001	5318	3	Public Management and Ethics
		5341	3	The Policy Process
	2001-2002	5318	3	Public Management and Ethics
		5341	3	The Policy Process
Hofer, Kay	2000-2001	5311	3	Public Finance Administration
		5321	3	Problems in Fed Intergov. Relations
		5351	3	Seminar in Am Political Institutions
	2001-2002	5311	3	Public Finance Administration
		5321	3	Problems in Fed Intergov. Relations
		5340	3	Problems in American Public Policy
Shields, Patricia	2000-2001	5335	3	Problems in Research Methodology
		5397	3	Applied Research Project
		5370	3	Internship in Government
	2001-2002	5335	3	Problems in Research Methodology
		5397	3	Applied Research Project
		5370	3	Internship in Government
Tajalli, Hassan	2000-2001	5303	3	Political Methodology and Research
		5311	3	Public Finance Administration
		5343	3	Seminar in Program Evaluation
	2001-2002	5303	3	Political Methodology and Research
		5311	3	Public Finance Administration
		5335	3	Problems in Research Methodology
		5343	3	Seminar in Program Evaluation
Ward, Kenneth	2000-2001	5330	3	Problems in Public Law
	2001-2002	5330	3	Problems in Public Law
Weinberger	2000-2001	5334	3	Problems in Quantitative Analysis

George	2001-2002	5345	3	Conceptual Found in Gov. Info. Sys.
		5346	3	Tech. of Gov. Info. Systems
		5347	3	Public Finance Information Systems
		5334	3	Problems in Quantitative Analysis
		5345	3	Conceptual Found in Gov. Info Sys.
		5346	3	Tech of Gov. Info. Systems
		5347	3	Public Finance Information Systems

D. Course Load

The normal teaching load per academic year for full-time faculty members is 6 courses. Summer teaching is optional and limited to two courses. Courses taught off campus are counted as part of the normal teaching load. Each semester the director of the program receives a course release for managing the program. Dr. George Weinberger has also been receiving a course release per semester for his effort to manage the department's LAN system, computer lab and dealing with students' technology questions and problems. Dr. Garofalo has a course release per semester for chairing the University Institutional Review Board. Dr. Shields is also responsible for the internship class where enrollment is low. It is included as part of her MPA Director position (See Standard 4.4).

Table 5.3
Core Faculty Course Load During Self-Study Year

Name	Normal Course Load	Actual Course Load	Reason/Date
Balanoff, Howard	6	6	
Garofalo, Charles	6	4	One course release per semester for Chairing Institutional Review Board
Hofer, Kay	6	6	
Shields, Patricia (director)	6	3	One course release per semester for directing the MPA program. Since 1996. One course release per year for editing <i>Armed Forces & Society</i> .
Tajalli, Hassan	6	6	
Ward, Kenneth	6	6	
Weinberger, George	6	4	One course release per semester for managing the department's LAN since 1996

E. Other Full-time Faculty:

None

5.2 Professional Qualifications

At least 75 percent of the professional graduate program's full-time faculty should hold an earned doctorate or other equivalent terminal professional degree in their field. Any full-time faculty member lacking the terminal degree must have a record or outstanding professional or academic experience directly relevant to the faculty member's assigned responsibilities. Full-time faculty actively pursuing appropriate terminal degree are to be included in the 25 percent not holding a terminal degree.

For both the self-study year and the preceding year, all full-time faculty members held doctorate degrees in their areas of specialty.

Table 5.4
Percent Full Time Faculty Holding Doctorate Degree

Date	Full-time Faculty Holding Doctorate Degree	Other Full-time Faculty Holding Doctorate Degree	Total
2000-2001	100%	NA	100%
2001-2002	100%	NA	100%

5.3 Practitioner Involvement

The involvement of practitioners is integral to the activities of a professional masters degree program. The institution shall specify how it involves practitioners in its program. Where practitioners teach courses, there shall be satisfactory evidence of the quality of their academic qualifications, professional experience, and teaching ability.

A. Self-Study Year and Previous Year

	<u>2000-2001</u>	<u>2001-2002</u>
Number (%) of required courses taught by full-time faculty	21 (84%)	22 (88%)
Number (%) of required courses taught by part-time faculty	4 (16%)	3 (12%)

Table 5.5
Summary of Practitioner Instructors

Name	<i>Semester / Year</i>	Job Title / Agency	Course	Degree & Field
Michael Berrier	Fall 2000	Instructor San Antonio College	POSI 5321 Intergovernmental Relations	Ed.D – Education MPA
Monte Akers	Spring 2001	Director, Legal Services, Texas Municipal League	POSI 5330 Problems in Public Law	JD
Alan Bojorquez	Spring 2001	Assistant General Counsel, Texas Municipal League	POSI 5351 Seminar in American Institutions	JD MPA
Jeffrey K. Richard	Summer 2001	Manager, Arthur Andersen, LLP	POSI 5312 (ELE) Public Sector Economics	MPP
Mario Espinoza	Spring 2002	Manager, Lower Colorado River Authority	POSI 5311 Public Finance Administration	MBA MPA
Alan Borjorquez	Spring 2002	Attorney at Law Bickerstaff, Heath, et al.	POSI 5321 Intergovernmental Relations	JD MPA
John Hinderer	Spring 2002	Asst. Professor, Texas Tech	POSI 5330 Problems in Public Law	Ph.D – MPA.

B. Practitioner Involvement Other than Teaching:

The MPA program is committed to the involvement of practitioners in its operation. We not only try to choose our part-time instructors from the pool of practitioners we also seek the help and advice of practitioners in other ways. Practitioners are often invited as guest lecturers to our classes. Our students have always expressed positive comments about practitioners' involvement in their courses.

Additionally, every semester we invite a number of public administrators to serve on oral exam committees. These practitioners are assigned the status of Graduate Adjunct Faculty. They read, comment, and assess the ARPs. Additionally, they are encouraged to take on a mentoring role.

Our MPA program is also assisted by an Advisory Council. The council is primarily composed of state, and local government practitioners. The council meets three times a year and serves as an advisory body for program activities and operation. The Advisory Council helps the program mission development, assessment and revision, curriculum development, program improvement, liaison and networking for our student, assistance with new student orientation, career development, and other activities. (See Appendix B for a list of current Advisory Council members.)

In addition to the involvement of practitioners in our Advisory Council, the program is involved with the Central Texas (CenTex) Chapter of ASPA. CenTex and the MPA Advisory Council sponsor twice a yearly mentoring mixers. Prominent practitioners (Mayor, State Representative, County Commissioners) and current and former students attend mixers. One purpose of these mixers is to promote networking between our students and practitioners.⁷¹ Research shows that informal mechanisms are effective at promoting mentoring among graduate students.⁷² Practitioners help publicize the program and recruit students. They also help us to place our interns and recruit our graduates.

Several of our faculty members are also directly involved in the practical dimensions of our field. Dr. Balanoff is the director of Certified Public Managers Program (CPM) for the state of Texas. Hundreds of public officials are trained through this program every year. As the director of CPM program, Dr. Balanoff regularly teaches and recruits practitioners to teach the students of this program. Dr. Garofalo has held a number of ethics training workshops for both state and local organizations. He also served on the Education and Training Task Force of the Texas Ethics Commission. Dr. Tajalli conducts surveys and prepares statistical reports for cities around this area (San Marcos and New Braunfels). He regularly consults with public officials on issues relating to statistical software and statistics.

5.4 Faculty Quality

In addition to the above, the qualitative adequacy of faculty members shall be demonstrated by their previous and current [instruction, research, experience and service].

A. Faculty Data Sheets:

Provided in Volume II of this report.

B. Promotion and Tenure

The Department of Political Science and the College of Liberal Arts use three criteria for tenure and promotion of the faculty members. These criteria are Teaching, Service, and Scholarship. On the recommendation of the department and in exceptional cases, the College of Liberal Arts will consider candidates for early tenure and/or promotion. These criteria are in conformity with policies of the college of Liberal Arts and the university.

Teaching: The teaching of each faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts is evaluated by the Personnel Committee and Department Chair on the basis of scholarly preparation, dedication, peer evaluation through classroom visits, and reviews of a teaching portfolio. Teaching is understood to include not only classroom performance, but other factors such as preparation, syllabi and other

⁷¹ Mission Element 18 & 19.

⁷² We learned of this research when Curt Shafer the Director of Texas State's Career Development Center spoke with the Advisory Council about ways to promote mentoring.

course materials, graded assignments, effective testing, staying current in the discipline, student academic and career counseling, and curriculum improvement.

In preparing the portfolio, candidates include the items listed below to document Teaching. Candidates for tenure should include material collected since initial date of employment. Candidates for promotion should include material collected since tenure (for those seeking promotion to Associate Professor), or the latest promotion (for those seeking promotion to Professor).

- A summary of student evaluations from all classes that evaluated the candidate using departmental forms
- Written statements and/or letters from colleagues who have observed candidate's classes
- Sample course syllabi, assignments, and examinations
- Examples of students' work
- Documentation of other achievements relevant to teaching, such as awards, funded grants, and/or curriculum development

Service: The College of Liberal Arts defines Service as any professionally related activity, other than teaching or scholarship, which contributes to the well being of the university, both in its internal and external aspects. It is expected that a faculty member will be able to demonstrate contributions—related to the faculty member's area of expertise— in one or more of the following areas: department, college, university, profession, or community. Examples of Service are holding office in professional organizations; chairing sessions at professional meetings; serving on departmental, college and university committees; and in general, any other activity that advances the best interest of the university. Service activities are subject to qualitative judgments, and the quality of service takes precedence over simply a long list of committee memberships.

Criteria for Scholarship: As minimum criteria for tenure and/or promotion to Associate Professor, the Department of Political Science requires five refereed articles or refereed book chapters, or a refereed book (in print or electronic format) or material counted as equivalent. Recognizing the diversity of specialties in the fields of Political Science and Law, the department deems other works as equivalents to traditional peer reviewed journal articles and/or book chapters. These include law review and bar journal articles. Refereed edited books in which the editor makes a substantial contribution are also to be counted as equivalent to book chapters and refereed articles. The extent to which an edited book counts as an equivalent to book chapters or journal articles depends on the extent the editor contributes to the work. Such contributions may include supplying a chapter or chapters to the book; substantive evaluative introductions and conclusions to the

book; and the extent that the editor is responsible for the conceptual design, selection, evaluation and editing of the contributors' work.

The Personnel Committee may accept other publications or evidence of scholarship as substitutes for those specified in the above paragraph if the candidate has demonstrated that the substitutes are of exceptionally high quality. The candidate's claim of high quality should be supported by evidence showing one or more of the following:

- that the work has been the subject of post publication reviews,
- that the work has been frequently cited or cited in important publications,
- that the candidate has been invited to submit the work on the basis of his or her standing in the field,
- that the work has brought significant distinction to the author and to the University,
- that the work has won a significant prize or award,
- that the work has been widely distributed and has had a significant impact on the profession or discipline,
- that the work has significantly contributed to the advancement of knowledge and affected the thinking and debate that occurs in the scholarly community or in the public or private sector.

In exceptional circumstances the committee may recommend tenure, notwithstanding the deficit in publications, based on its own qualitative review of the candidate and/or its own judgment of the candidate's standing in the broader academic community.

Promotion to Professor requires roughly the same amount of material for promotion to Associate Professor. This material must be published subsequent to promotion to Associate Professor.

Only refereed scholarship or creative work that is in print, or documented as forthcoming, will be counted as part of the Scholarly/Creative record. The candidate must provide documentation, i.e., letters of acceptance from publishers or journal editors listing date of publication. Written work that is under review, under contract, or being revised or resubmitted will not count and should not be listed under Publications on the Curriculum Vita.

Preparation and Review of the Portfolio: In preparing the portfolio, candidates should follow instructions established in the College of Liberal Arts' criteria. Candidates who wish to stand for tenure or promotion must submit all credentials (vita, Review Group Information Form, and supporting documents) to the department chair.

Personnel committee members in each division within the department (Political Science, Public Administration, Legal Studies) meet prior to the department personnel committee for the purpose of assessing the quality of their respective candidates' scholarly and creative credentials. Division faculty report their initial assessment as an advisory vote to the department personnel committee. The MPA faculty's assessment carries significant weight in the final decision.

5.41 Instruction

Efforts to improve the instructional program, include student advisement, teaching methods, course content, and innovative curricula development.

A. Quality of Instruction:

All MPA faculty are committed to high quality teaching. The MPA program prides itself on having been able to realize and maintain this commitment. Alumni Survey (graduates 1991-1999; n=91) results suggest that the quality of teaching is high. For example, 95 percent of the Alumni found "faculty preparation" and "knowledge of the subject matter" either "good" or "excellent".

The Graduate College Exit Survey also supports the claim of quality teaching. Over 90% rate the "usefulness of faculty criticism" as "good" or "excellent." Faculty "helpfulness in dealing with class work" was rated by over 60% of the students as "excellent" (all other responses were "good"). Ninety six percent of the students "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that there was "good communication between students and faculty." The graduate college exit survey also constructed scales to assess overall "teaching quality" (6 items) and "faculty concern for students" (4 items). In both scales the mean score for the MPA Program was high and above the overall mean for Texas State and Liberal Arts. (See Appendix G).

The most obvious evidence of quality teaching is in the Exit Survey Results. Students have consistently expressed their pleasure with the quality of teaching and the availability and accessibility of MPA professors. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 summarize the results. The exit survey was conducted between the Fall of 2000 and Spring of 2002. Students were asked to respond to statements about the MPA program's contribution to their knowledge and skills in areas identified by NASPAA, the literature and discussions with employers. "Strongly Agree" was the mode response in all categories. (See Appendix I for complete tables with results.)

Table 5.6
Student Assessment: Public Administration Knowledge

The MPA Program contributed to my Knowledge in this area (n=32)	Agree & Strongly Agree
Decision making—Problem Solving	93.8%
Financial Administration	96.9%
Human resource Administration	96.9%
Policy Process	96.9%
Intergovernmental Relations	93.8%
Ethics	96.9%
Information System/Technology ⁷³	81.2%
Public Management	96.9%
Organizational	93.8%
Applied Research	100%
Law	90.6%

Table 5.7
Student Assessment: Public Administration Skill Development

The MPA program contributed to the development of my skills (n=32)	Agree & Strongly Agree
Writing	100%
Quantitative Analysis	100%
Oral Communication	96.9%
Ability to function in a team	81.3%
Financial analysis	93.8%
Presentation	96.9%
Interpersonal relations	84.4%
Project management	96.9%
Supervisory	78.2%
Program evaluation	84.4%
Assessment	93.8%
Use of technology	84.4%

⁷³ Based in part on this finding the faculty began to explicitly increase the use of technology across the curriculum. Also, we believe the nature of the question deals with the contribution to their knowledge in this area. Many students enter the program with a sophisticated knowledge of this subject area. Over 90% of these same students agreed and strongly agreed that the program is “committed to state of the art technology” and that the “program reinforces the use of technology in management.” Mission Elements 11 & 13.

In addition the Exit Survey contained items that dealt directly with the mission and aspects of teaching quality. These results are summarized in Table 5.8. In this case over 90% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed with mission related statements. Again the mode response in all cases was “strongly agree.” These findings show that the faculty as a whole are in sync with the mission and that students know it. These results are the best and strongest evidence for overall teaching effectiveness and teaching quality.

Table 5.8
Student Assessment: Mission Statements Related to Teaching
Effectiveness

Statement: The MPA Program (Mission elements are numbered See Table 2.1) (n=32)	Agree & Strongly Agree
11. is committed to state of the art technology.	96.9%
12. emphasizes the central role of ethics in public service.	96.9%
13. reinforces the use of technology in management.	93.8%
17. enables rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty.	96.9%
21. emphasizes management in political institutions and processes.	96.9%
22. integrates theoretical and applied approach to public management.	100%
23. prepares students for careers as managers in public service.	100%
24. prepares students for careers as leaders in public service.	100%

Aside from student assessment, MPA faculty have received teaching awards. Dr. Shields has won several teaching awards. In 2001 she won the university’s highly prized “Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching.” In the same year, the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce recognized her for her achievement in teaching. The Austin Society for Public Administration recognized Dr. Shields for excellence in teaching and service in 1993. In 1985, she became an honorary member of the Golden Key National Honor society in recognition of “Outstanding Teaching.” Not only has Dr. Shields’ teaching excellence benefited her own students, but her publications on teaching also demonstrate teaching quality. The following are Dr. Shields’ publications relating to teaching.

2000 *STEP by STEP: Building a Research Paper*. Stillwater OK: New Forums Press.

1999 “Getting Organized: A Pragmatic Tool for Writing Graduate Papers,” *Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development*. Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 5-17.

1998 “Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Science: A Tool for Public Administration.” in *Research in Public Administration*. Vol. 4., edited by Jay White. (JAI Press: Stamford, CT): 195-225.

Other faculty have also been recognized for their commitment to quality teaching. In May of 2002, Dr. Tajalli was recognized by the CenTex Chapter of ASPA as the “Public Administration Professor of the Year.”⁷⁴ In addition, Dr. Balanoff received an award for excellence in teaching and service by the Austin Society for Public Administration in 1992.

The ultimate criterion for measuring teaching excellence is the learning experience of the students. The learning experience of our students has brought them numerous national and local awards for their intellectual work. We view their success at winning these prizes as our success in preparing them to realize their potential. Below is the list of national and local awards granted to our students for their Applied Research Projects that were directed by Dr. Shields. (See Appendix E for a list of the students and the titles of the winning papers.)

We also monitor teaching effectiveness in more traditional ways. All faculty, both full-time and part-time, are evaluated by their students each semester. The primary purpose of these evaluations is self-improvement of the faculty. The Chair also uses these evaluations as a criterion for tenure, promotion, and merit raises.

Teaching quality of tenure-track faculty is monitored by their peers and the Chair. Several times during the probationary period of tenure-track faculty, senior faculty visit their classrooms and make extensive reports on the strength and the weaknesses of their teaching. These reports also help the junior faculty improve the quality of his/her teaching.

B. Workload Policy:

The normal full-time faculty teaching assignment is three courses per semester. Faculty can also elect to teach one or two courses during summer. In addition to regular teaching courses, faculty may accept directing independent studies. Dr. Shields (Program Director), Dr. Weinberger (LAN manager) and Dr. Garofalo (Chair University Institutional Review Board) each teach four courses a year. Graduate courses at Texas State are all counted as three-hour courses.

Only one section of a course is offered in a semester. Therefore, the number of faculty preparations in a semester is equal to the number of courses they teach. Since some courses are offered every semester and others only once a year, annual preparations by a faculty varies from three to five per year. Toward the end of their program, students are expected to write a thorough scholarly paper. This Applied Research Project (ARP) is directed by Dr. Shields. Students take two formal courses in preparation and execution

⁷⁴ Dr. Tajalli received a heartfelt spontaneous standing ovation during the award ceremony. Most of the members of the audience were his students.

of their research. Both courses are normally taught and directed by Dr. Shields and considered part of her teaching assignment.

C. Class Size

Table 5.9 Class Size

Courses	F98	SP99	SU99	F99	SP00	SU00	F00	SP01	SU01	F01	SP02	SU02
5303	13	13		15	13	8	13	8		9	15	10
5311	9	14		13	17		13	17		11	13	
5312									10			
5314	9			21			18	24		18	17	
5315	15	11		21	26		17	16		13	19	
5316						17						
5317			13						13			
5318	21	10		11	6		20	9		21	19	
5321	24	8	19	16		14	11				8	19
5330	8	9		12	23		14	11		10	11	
5333			10			11						9
5334	8	6		7	12		15	8		13	11	
5335	10	14		13	14		10	20		13	14	
5340					24						15	
5341			5			7			16			20
5343	10			11			9			10		
5345										5		
5346		8			14			10				
5347						13	7					17
5351				12	6		7	8	6	4		
5370	1	2		1	1	2	2	1			1	1
5375	11			8						17		
5397	11	7	14	9	14	5	9	5	7	11	10	7
5398	3	5	2	1		2	5	7	8	5	9	

D. Actual Credit-Hours Taught

Table 5.10
Credit Hours Taught by Faculty Nucleus

Nucleus Faculty Member	Year: 2000-2001*				Year: 2001-2002*			
	Grad	Under- Graduate	Cont. Ed.	Total	Grad	Under- Graduate	Cont. Ed.	Total
Balanoff	21	3		24	15	9		
Garofalo	9	9		18	6	6		12
Hofer	15	12		27	12	9		21
Shields	18			18	15			15
Tajalli	12	12	-	24	15	12	-	27
Ward	6	12		18	6	12		18
Weinberger	15	-	-	15	15	-	-	15

* Includes Summer teaching.

A. Research:

Research, Writing, Publications

During the last four years (1998-2002) the MPA faculty has been very active in producing scholarly and professional publications. These publications range from scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and books to professional reports. As a result of her scholarship in the area of armed forces, Dr. Shields was named as the editor of internationally recognized *Armed Forces & Society* journal in February of 2001. Dr. Balanoff is the editor of *Public Administration: Annual Editions*. He has published this annual every other year since 1990. During the past four years the MPA faculty has published 6 books, 22 articles and a number of book reviews. In addition to these publications, three professional reports were prepared for the cities of San Marcos and New Braunfels by a faculty member. The faculty has also delivered about 35 presentations in scholarly conferences.

Three research grants were obtained by the faculty during this period. Dr. Tajalli has received a Texas State Research Enhancement grant to study the characteristics of mediation programs in Argentina. He has also received a grant from The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to analyze the mediation program of the San Antonio District Office of the EEOC. In 1999, Dr. Ward was awarded a Texas State Research Enhancement grant for research on contemporary constitutional theory.

5.43 Experience and Service:

Professional experience and public service with government, industry, non-profit agencies, or consulting assignments

The MPA faculty has been very active in providing services to the university, community, and our professional organizations. The university administrators have regularly requested the professional help of the MPA faculty. For example, Dr. Garofalo is the chair of the university's Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects in Research and Dr. Tajalli has regularly helped the university administrators. We regularly conduct university-wide survey of students to gauge the attitudes of students toward national issues. In addition, the faculty serves on various university committees.

The MPA faculty is particularly committed to providing service to our professional community. Dr. Balanoff has served on the Board of CenTex ASPA, the national ASPA Council and has won the prestigious "Stone" award for service from ASPA in 2000. Dr. Balanoff is also the director of Certified Public Manager's program (CPM) for the state of Texas. Hundreds of public servants and other professionals are trained in this program every year. The CPM program is committed to bring a high level of professionalism in our community of public servants. Similarly, Dr. Garofalo holds ethics training workshops for both state and local organizations. He also serves on the Education and Training Task Force of the Texas Ethics Commission. In 1998, Drs. Shields and Tajalli held a one-week training workshop for the department directors of the city of San Marcos. Dr. Tajalli has produced three professional reports for the cities of San Marcos and New Braunfels. He has also assisted The City of Bryan's police department in setting up a computerized program to analyze the city's child delinquency. Dr. Tajalli assisted in assessing, analyzing and recommending necessary organizational changes to the "San Antonio River Authority." The director of "Radio Division" in the city of Austin was helped in setting up a quality control program for his division. Last year Drs. Shields and Tajalli reviewed Masters of Public Administration programs in Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and Texas A & M International University-Laredo respectively. Dr. Shields is also a member of Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. Dr. Shields is also on the board of CenTex ASPA.

Dr. Hofer has been heavily engaged in the local chapters of the League of Women Voters and the American Cancer Society.

5.5 Faculty Diversity

There should be evidence that specific plans are being implemented to assure the diversity of the composition of the faculty with respect to the representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, Programs and plans to insure faculty diversity shall generally reflect NASPAA's diversity Guidelines

Diversity Plans: In February of 2002, the MPA Faculty met to draft a diversity plan. The plan, which has subsequently been integrated into the Political Science and

Liberal Arts strategic plan, contains four elements. (See Appendix A for more strategic planning information.)

- Objective: “Hire a qualified minority faculty the next time a MPA faculty nucleus opening occurs.

Outcome: “More ethnic diversity in the MPA Faculty nucleus.”

Strategy: “Use every means available to identify and recruit minority candidates for faculty nucleus position when available”

- Objective: Increase the pool of qualified minorities that can be used as adjunct professors by the MPA Program.

Outcome: Have 7 vitae of qualified minorities on file in the Political Science.

Strategy: MPA Faculty and Advisory Council make every effort to identify and contact qualified minorities and ask them to submit their vita for consideration as adjunct professors in the MPA Program.

- Objective: Increase the number of qualified minorities that are used as adjuncts by the MPA Program.

Outcome: Fill at least one third of new adjunct faculty positions with qualified minority faculty over a school year.

Strategy: MPA Program Director and Political Science Department Chair find and hire minority faculty as adjuncts.

- Objective: Increase the number of qualified minorities that are used as graduate adjunct professors during oral examinations for the MPA Program

Outcome: Have 15 minority graduate adjunct faculty resumes and University approvals on file in the MPA office. Use minority graduate adjunct faculty on at least one third of all oral examinations each semester.

Strategy: Find more qualified minorities willing to serve on oral examinations

Diversity Data:

TABLE 5.11 Faculty Diversity

Faculty*	AA/EEO/ADA Category**	Rank	Tenure Status
A	White Female	Professor	Tenured
B	White Female	Professor	Tenured
C	Asian Male	Assist. Professor	Untenured

*Faculty listed by letter.

Table 5.12
Faculty Diversity: Part-time Faculty

Faculty	AA/EEO/ADA Category	Rank	Tenure Status
A	Hispanic	Instructor	Untenured
B	Black	Instructor	Untenured
C	Hispanic	Instructor	Untenured
D	Hispanic	Instructor	Untenured

*Faculty listed by letter.

C. Faculty Searches

The MPA program has hired one faculty member within the last four years. Dr. Hassan Tajalli (a faculty member who is Asian) was a full-time adjunct faculty in the department for thirteen years (ten years of which he taught in the MPA program) before his status was changed to tenure track for the Fall of 1999. Thirteen years of excellent teaching record, research, and service convinced the senior faculty support the conversion of Dr. Tajalli's position to a tenure track, assistant professor position.

STANDARD 6.0--ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

6.1 Admission Goals and Standards

Admission goals, policy and standards, including academic prerequisites, should be clearly and publicly stated, specifying any differences for pre-service, in-service or other categories of students, and reflecting specific concern for the representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Programs and plans designed to insure student diversity shall generally reflect NASPAA's Diversity Guidelines.

A. Mission, Assessment and Guiding Performance:

There are several elements of our mission statement and philosophy that guide our admission policy. First, we believe the “program serves the diverse community that is Central Texas.”⁷⁵ Hence, we have a regional mission. The Central Texas region contains the state capital as well as two large urban areas (Austin and San Antonio). In addition, there are many smaller municipalities along the I-35 Corridor. Central Texas has a highly respected, selective, Policy School (LBJ School). We serve the region and complement the LBJ School by offering opportunities to a wider variety of students.

In another part of our mission we state that the MPA Program is distinguished by “providing opportunity to a diverse student body.”⁷⁶ Both Texas State’s undergraduate programs and the Central Texas area have a large Hispanic population. For example, 19% of the bachelors degrees awarded at Texas State are to Hispanics. The San Marcos-Austin area is 25% Hispanic and the San Antonio Area is 60% Hispanic. African Americans make up approximately 6% of the population of Central Texas. We want our student body to reflect the population diversity that characterizes Central Texas.

We “serve the region” and “provide opportunity to a diverse student body” through a flexible admission process that takes into account the prospective student’s ability to succeed in our program. We also believe that we have an outcome assessment process and student support network in place that assures high quality graduates. Therefore, we are not sacrificing quality with admissions flexibility.

Although we admit both pre-service and in-service students, the vast majority of our admissions are in-service. This is consistent with our philosophy “We educate practitioners.” Thus, we admit a high proportion of practitioners and take into account professional experience during the admission process. In addition, we consider an applicant’s work experience, strengths, and weaknesses. Background requirements address weaknesses.

B. Admission Process:

A prospective student seeks admission by filling out an application and sending it to the Graduate College for processing. Once all the paperwork (transcripts, GRE Scores) is

⁷⁵ Mission Element 1. (See Table 2.1.)

⁷⁶ Mission Element 14.

complete the file is forwarded to the MPA Director for review. The director reviews the packet for qualifications. If necessary, students that meet admission requirements may be required to take additional background requirements (most often statistics). The director may recommend that a marginal applicant's packet be forwarded to a committee for further review. (Process discussed below.)

Admission policies, standards, and practices are consistently applied to full-time students, (pre-service or in-service), part-time students, students with non-traditional backgrounds, transfers, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. Admission to the MPA Program requires an undergraduate degree in any discipline and acceptance by the Texas State Graduate College.

C. Representation:

As noted earlier, the MPA Program is characterized by significant student diversity. The primary way we recruit minorities is through word of mouth. Both African American and Hispanic graduates and students are enthusiastic about the program and share this enthusiasm with their friends and colleagues at work. When asked why they chose Texas State, minority applicants usually list several minority student (or graduate) friends that have recommended the program.⁷⁷ The Texas State MPA Program is valued because it offers classes at convenient times and locations, has small classes, supports minorities, and develops skills and knowledge.

The program promotes retention through networking that begins at student orientation and ends with the oral exam. For example, alumni and Advisory Council member, Martha Castex-Tatum⁷⁸, the first African American, female San Marcos City Council member, welcomes students during orientation. She is also there as the graduate experience ends. Martha has served on three oral exam committees of African American female students.

Retention is also promoted through mentoring and socializing. CenTex ASPA and the Advisory Council jointly sponsor two mentoring mixers a year. The idea began when a speaker from Texas State's Career Services addressed the Advisory Council. Here we learned that the best type of mentoring among graduate students tends to be informal. Subsequently, regular mentoring mixers were planned. Each long semester, graduates, CenTex members, faculty and students⁷⁹ meet at a local restaurant for a few hours of socializing on a Friday evening. The mixers are well attended (60+). The mixers are advertised via the student list serve, alumni list serve, class announcements and CenTex flyers and Web site.

Informal student activities also support retention. We have learned that for many courses, students have an informal class electronic distribution list where they discuss each class

⁷⁷ 77% of exiting graduate students (n=23) "strongly agree" that they would "advise a friend with similar interest to study" in the Texas State MPA Program. Most others "agreed." (Graduate College Survey) Only 3% of Alumni indicated that they would not recommend the MPA Program to others.

⁷⁸ Martha is pictured in cap and gown with her diploma in hand in promotional material.

⁷⁹ LBJ School students and faculty also attend. The majority of those attending are Texas State students.

and support each other in the process. It appears that this informal electronic communication among students builds bonds. Minority students are particularly active on these distribution lists.

6.2 Baccalaureate Requirement

Admissions shall normally be limited to applicants with a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution and appropriately evaluated applicants from non-U. S. universities.

Applicants without a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution would not be considered for admission. Occasionally Texas State students in the last semester of their senior year are admitted contingent upon graduation.

6.3 Admission Factors

Admission shall be limited to applicants showing good potential for success in professional graduate study and public service. Admission standards shall include several of the following factors about each applicant: (a) performance on the aptitude part of the Graduate Record Exam or the Graduate Management Admissions Test, or equivalent tests; (b) undergraduate grade point average and trend of grades; (c) rank in graduating class; and (d) biographical and career interest data and essays; and (e) evaluation of the quality of professional experience. These admissions standards should recognize the need for different measures to establish the criteria of excellence between pre-service and in-service students. Final judgment on admission shall be based on a combination of several of the above indicators rather than on a single criterion in order to increase the quality of professional personnel entering the public service.

A. Admission Factors:

To be admitted to the Graduate College applicants must have a GPA of 2.75 (4.0 scale) and a GRE score of 900 (preferred) or above or a GPA between 2.5 to 2.74 and a GRE score of 1000 (preferred) or above. GRE scores are a combination of verbal and quantitative. GPAs are computed on the last 60 hours. GRE scores are one measure of a student's ability to succeed in the MPA Program and are never used as the only criteria of admission. Applicants with a 2.85 GPA or above can be admitted without a GRE on file. The GRE must be taken within the first long semester. Admission decisions for regular admission are made by the Program Director. Applicants that have not completed a statistics class (with a B or better) are required to take POSI 5303 as a background course in the first 9 hours.

In 2001 the Texas State Legislature passed House Bill 1641. This legislation amended Chapter 51 of the Education Code and directly influences how we can consider the GRE (or any other standardized test) in admission decisions. According to HB 1641 an "applicant's performance on a standardized test may not be used in the admission or competitive scholarship process for a graduate or professional program as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant or as the primary criterion to end consideration of the applicant." Prior to this legislation we specified a particular GRE score that was

required for unconditional admission. Currently, we list a “preferred” GRE score.

Pre-service students are required to take an internship within the first 24 hours. All applicants must document relevant work experience before the internship background requirement is waived. The internship requirement is on the student’s degree outline as a three-hour background class (POSI 5370).

For international students a score of 550 on the TOEFL and 3 on the TWE is required. The TOEFL and TWE are required for international students regardless of the location of their baccalaureate degree and regardless of their proficiency in English.

Table 6.1
Average GRE and GPA of students admitted by school year

School Year	GPA	GRE
2001-2002	3.03	867
2000-2001	3.17	927
1999-2000	3.10	896
1998-1999	3.02	988

B. Admissions Record:

As Tables 6.2 – 6.5 show, over the four self study years the Texas State MPA Program admitted between 59 (98-99) and 44 (99-00) students. Between 55 and 70 % of the applicants eventually enrolled. Consistent with our mission, minority and female representation is substantial. For example, in academic year 2001-2002, 66 % of the students that enrolled were minority. In addition, approximately, 80% of our students enroll part time.

The conditional admission category merits further explanation. Over the course of the accreditation cycle there were other factors that triggered “conditional” status. Until 2000, students were admitted conditionally if they had additional background courses to complete. At that time there were three background classes⁸⁰ (internship, statistics, and a seminar in American Institutions). Most students were classified as conditional. The director was under the impression that completion of background requirements was a Graduate College criterion for regular admission. The Graduate College notified the director that background requirements should not be taken into account when assigning the formal "conditional" status to a student's admission. Subsequently, we have changed the policy and the percent of our conditional

⁸⁰ After several faculty meetings and discussions with the Advisory Council, the program decided to drop the American Institutions (POSI 5351) class as a background requirement because the required competencies were already covered in the core. Previously, to be exempted from POSI 5351 a student must have had at least one upper division political science (American government related) class. Thus only Political Science majors and minors were exempted from this background requirement. In addition, most Political Science majors did not take statistics (with a “B” or better) as undergraduates. Hence, almost every student entered the program on conditional status.

admissions has dropped substantially. The tables below distinguish between conditional admissions (applicants that met admission requirements except background) and probationary (those below the formal admissions standards).

Table 6.2
Admissions Data 2001-2002 Academic Year

	Minority Female	Minority Male	White Female	White Male	Total
Applicant	11	13	14	9	47
Regular Admission	4	6	9	6	25
Conditional Admission	7	4	5	3	19
Probationary Admission	0	3	0	0	3
*Denied Admission	0	0	0	0	0
Registered Full-time	1	3	0	0	4
Registered Part-time	3	8	8	4	32
*Never Enrolled	7	2	7	4	11

*Information not required but helpful for clarification.

Table 6.3
Admissions Data 2000-2001 Academic Year

	Minority Female	Minority Male	White Female	White Male	Total
Applicant	12	9	17	15	53
Regular Admission	1	0	2	3	6
Conditional Admission	11	8	15	12	46
Probationary Admission	0	1	0	0	1
*Denied Admission	0	0	0	0	0
Registered Full-time	3	2	1	1	7
Registered Part-time	8	3	10	10	31
*Never Enrolled	1	4	6	4	15

*Information not required but helpful for clarification.

Table 6.4
Admissions Data 1999-2000 Academic Year

	Minority Female	Minority Male	White Female	White Male	Total
Applicant	10	12	9	13	44
Regular Admission	0	0	0	0	0
Conditional Admission	6	8	8	12	34
Probationary Admission	2	3	1	1	7
*Denied Admission	2	1	0	0	3
Registered Full-time	2	1	0	2	5
Registered Part-time	3	8	8	8	27
*Never Enrolled	3	2	1	3	9

*Information not required but helpful for clarification.

Table 6.5
Admissions Data 1998-1999 Academic Year

	Minority Female	Minority Male	White Female	White Male	Total
Applicant	13	8	14	24	59
Regular Admission	1	0	0	2	3
Conditional Admission	8	6	9	17	40
Probationary Admission	1	0	1	2	4
*Denied Admission	3	2	4	3	12
Registered Full-time	1	1	1	2	5
Registered Part-time	8	4	3	13	28
*Never Enrolled	1	1	6	6	14

*Information not required but helpful for clarification.

C. Probationary Student Assessments:

Students that do not meet all Graduate College and MPA requirements may be admitted on a conditional basis. Students that depart only marginally from the above conditions (e.g., GPA 2.4 and GRE 1010) are admitted by the Program Director. In these cases the conditions of admission generally include maintaining a GPA in the program (3.25 in first 12 hours).

Otherwise, student admission is referred to a committee for approval. In these instances the applicant is required to supply additional evidence that they have the potential to succeed in the program. This generally entails a meeting with the Program Director, letters of recommendation, work experience, documentation of additional course work. Letters of recommendation from past or current students are particularly useful. Graduates and current students understand the course requirements and know the abilities of the applicant. Two MPA faculty and the Program Director must sign off on the "Admission Justification" form before a candidate can be admitted. Conditions of admission might include writing courses (with a B or better), a statistics course (with a B or better). (See Appendix H for a copy of the Admission Justification form.)

D. Enrollment/Size of Program:

Provide the following table covering the self-study year and three preceding years.

Table 6.6
PROGRAM SIZE--NUMBER OF STUDENTS REGISTERED IN FALL TERM

YEAR	Full-Time	Part-Time	TOTAL	Minority	Female	Disabilities
1998	9	79	88	36	40	
1999	13	74	87	37	39	1
2000	14	64	78	38	37	1
2001	13	70	83	34	39	

STANDARD 7.0 – STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services and Mission: The role of student services is captured through several mission elements. Students are served through an accessible faculty member. This is captured through "the program is distinguished by enabling rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty."⁸¹ An accessible faculty advises students as part of their ongoing activity. An accessible faculty is one that is aware of a student's advising and career needs and is able to support the student in both. During the mission retreat and mission related activities of the Advisory Council, the importance of faculty accessibility was stressed. An accessible faculty is one that is constantly advising. Minor problems are resolved before they escalate when the faculty is accessible. During exit interviews, students frequently mention the accessibility of the faculty as one of the "best" things about the program. Survey evidence supports this. Seventy seven percent of the Alumni rated faculty accessibility as "good or excellent." The exit survey revealed that 69% "strongly agreed" and 28% "agreed" that the program "enabled rich and frequent contact between students and faculty" (total agreed 97%).

Since most of our students have full time jobs, we place more importance on networking and developing professional ties than placement. We believe that networking and ties to professional associations are critical components of long run career success. This commitment is found in our mission statement. "The program is distinguished by providing students with professional networking opportunities."⁸² "The program is distinguished by providing alumni with professional networking opportunities"⁸³ Finally, "the program responds to the changing environment through links to professional associations and organizations."⁸⁴ The 2000 Alumni Survey revealed that 46% of the alumni felt that networking opportunities were fair or poor. Subsequently, the mentoring mixers⁸⁵ and the list serves that kept students informed about CenTex activities (state conference, luncheons) were initiated. The more recent exit surveys reveal that 88% (agreed or strongly agreed) that the program provides students with professional networking opportunities. Further, 97% (agree or strongly agree) that the program focuses on continuing professional development. In addition, the CenTex Chapter that is approximately 80% Texas State students and alumni is recognized through numerous awards as one of the most effective chapters in the country.

⁸¹ Mission Element 17. (See Table 2.1.)

⁸² Mission Element 18.

⁸³ Mission Element 19. (See Table 2.1.)

⁸⁴ Mission Element 9.

⁸⁵ The mentoring mixers are co-sponsored by the MPA Advisory Council.

7.1 Advisement and Appraisal

Strong and continuous program advisement, career guidance, and progress appraisal shall be available for all students from the point of admission through graduation.

A. Advising System:

The Texas State MPA Program provides continuous advisement to students in a variety of areas including choice of courses, career guidance, and academic progress. The formal process begins with a student orientation, which is held on the day before classes begin in the Fall Semester.⁸⁶ Students receive an initial orientation from the Texas State Graduate College and then receive a specific orientation from the MPA Director and the MPA faculty about Program courses and options. Also participating at the initial MPA orientation are members of both the MPA Advisory Council and CenTex ASPA Board, which includes MPA alumni and students⁸⁷.

During each long semester a “mixer” is held for MPA students. One purpose of this mixer is to provide new MPA students with “mentors” who are drawn from MPA alumni and students that are senior in the MPA Program. One of the key features of the mixer is that it is held in cooperation with the CenTex Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA).

After the initial orientations are held, MPA students receive continuous advisement from all MPA faculty through their courses. Assessment measures such as the alumni and exit surveys and exit interviews support this. Students also receive continuous advisement from the MPA Director, Dr. Patricia Shields, and the MPA Administrative Assistant, Nancy Warren. Ms. Warren is well-qualified and available to answer questions over the phone 40 hours a week. Students are encouraged to contact Dr. Shields or Ms. Warren with advising questions. In addition students use e-mail to contact Dr. Shields or Ms. Warren. They usually receive a reply within 24 hours. During an exit interview one student enthusiastically noted "Nancy is the best thing about the program!" Academic Progress is monitored on a regular basis. For example, the MPA Administrative Assistant is constantly computing Grade Point Averages for events such as induction in Pi Alpha Alpha, the National Honor Society for Public Administration and Affairs.

Students are also kept up to date with program information through the MPA-L list serve. Notice of program activities and news goes out to the students. Thus, if a class is canceled or has changed location students are notified quickly.

Although Texas State has no special advisement programs for minorities and women, MPA faculty are searching for opportunities for all of our MPA students. For example, one of our disabled minority students was provided an opportunity to do an internship with the Atlanta Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

⁸⁶ New students usually receive advising by either Nancy Warren or Pat Shields when they are accepted or register. Pat Shields and Nancy Warren are available to meet incoming students on a as needed basis.

⁸⁷ In the fall of 1999, Bill Billingsly, student Advisory Council member and President of the CenTex ASPA Chapter spoke to incoming students.

Another one of our students (female) was encouraged to apply for the prestigious Ridley Scholarship, which is offered on an annual basis by the Texas City Management Association. She won the scholarship in a statewide competition.

B. Financial Assistance:

An overwhelming majority of the MPA students that attend the Texas State MPA Program are in-service students. They already hold full time jobs and are enrolled in evening classes. MPA students are eligible to serve as teaching assistants for the Department of Political Science. The MPA Program only recently (Spring, 2002) funded one scholarship for an MPA student (\$500) named for Francis Rich, former Chair of the Political Science Department and founder of the MPA Program.⁸⁸ On occasion, a pre-service MPA student may receive an appointment as a teaching assistant in the Political Science Department. During the 2001/2002 Academic year one MPA student received such an appointment. Two students received support for their work as editorial assistants for *Armed Forces & Society*.

Table 7.1
Financial Assistance 1998 - 2002

Student	Teaching Assistant	Research Assistant	Scholarship
Michael Parker	x		
Nicholas Johnson ⁸⁹		x	x
Rayana Gonzales	x		
Arijana Oldashi	x		
Betty Elof		x	
Stephanie Garcia			x
Brian Armstrong			x
Bill Billingsley			x
Jacob Rodriguez ⁹⁰			x
Joya Hays			x
Stacy Gilley			x

C. Student Attrition:

The MPA program has had a moderate rate of attrition over the years. Since the Program is offered in the evening and students can often take as few as one course per semester, it can be said that most of our MPA students eventually graduate. However, they may take a few extra years to complete their program.

⁸⁸ There is a Francis M. Rich Memorial Scholarship that is not yet completely funded. There is over \$8,500 in the account and the university requires a \$10,000 to fund regular scholarships.

⁸⁹ Nicholas also has a track scholarship. He is ranked 8th in the nation on the 100 meter. Thus the Texas State MPA Program has the distinction of having the fastest MPA Student in the world.

⁹⁰ Lt. Jacob Rodriguez is on active duty and was funded through the Air Force.

The MPA Program faculty work hard to keep our students enrolled. We advise them to reduce their course loads or leave the university for a semester when their workloads increase beyond their capability to handle the increase. For example, a number of our MPA students are legislative aides for the Texas House or Texas Senate. During those years that the Texas Legislature is in session (one semester every two years), we advise our MPA students to drop out for that semester and return the following academic semester.

Table 7.2 illustrates the number and percentage of students that are no longer active in the MPA Program. The MPA-L and MPAJOBS-L electronic list serves helps us to stay in contact with students that are not enrolled in classes. Currently there are 130 subscribers to the MPA-L list serve. While this number includes faculty and a few graduates it also includes students that have temporarily dropped out of the program.

Table 7.2
Students Who Are No Longer Active

	Full-time Number	Full-time Percent	Part-time Number	Part-time Percent	Total Number	Total Percent
Minority Female	1	7.7%	3	23.0%	4	30.8%
Minority Male	1	7.7%			1	7.7%
White Female			2	15.4%	2	15.4%
White Male	2	15.4%	4	30.8%	6	46.1%
Total No Longer Active	4	30.8%	9	69.2%	13	100%

Table 7.3 identifies the students that are no longer active and provides explanations for their withdrawal from the program.

Table 7.3
Students No Longer Active

STUDENT	GENDER	ETHNICITY	HOURS COMPLETED	COMMENTS
A	Male	White	Withdrew	Took teaching position.
B	Male	White	9	Work conflict.
C	Male	White	0	Transferred to another school.
D	Female	Hispanic	0	Transferred to another program.
E	Female	White	24	Moved home (mother died).
F	Female	Hispanic	6	Unknown
G	Male	White	0	Transferred to another program.
H	Female	White	3	Work conflict.
I	Male	White	6	Low GPA
J	Male	Asian	39	Hasn't completed ARP.
K	Female	White	0	Personal problems.
L	Male	White	3	Health problems.
M	Female	Hispanic	0	Transferred to another program.

7.2 Placement Service

The program and/or the institution shall provide an adequate placement service oriented to public affairs and administration.

A. Placement Assistance:

Each MPA faculty member provides career guidance to our MPA students. For example, most of our faculty are members of professional organizations such as the Texas Municipal League and the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). The MPA faculty strongly encourages our MPA students to join these organizations as student members because these professional organizations often provide job assistance to new students seeking entry into City Management, State and Federal Service etc.

Students interested in employment opportunities also are encouraged to join the MPAJOBS-L list serve. Internship opportunities are also posted. Employers around Texas routinely send job postings to the MPA Program that are posted to the JOBS list serve. Alumni that are interested in job opportunities are also welcome to be part of the JOBS list serve. Rayana Gonzales used the JOBS list serve to secure a position as a New York Public Management Intern. She competed nationally for this prestigious internship.

It should be mentioned that most of our MPA students are in-service students and already hold jobs in either State or City government. Much of our counseling is aimed at helping them move up in the organizations in which they are employed.

MPA students have access to a wide variety of career related programs and services through the University's Office of Career Services. Located in the new LBJ Student Center, the Texas State Office of Career Services provides assistance and services such as how to write a resume, how to do research to find a job and how to interview with a prospective employer. These services are provided to both undergraduate and graduate Texas State students. In addition, career assessment instruments and computerized career guidance programs are available for use by MPA students.

Specialized assistance to disabled students is also available through the Texas State Office of Career Services. Career Services provided significant assistance to at least one disabled MPA student. After receiving such assistance the student received employment by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The JC Penney Career Information Center houses additional resources to help students learn about potential governmental and non-governmental employers. Assistance and information is provided to graduate and undergraduate students for all majors.

Special Programs such as the National Multicultural Job Expo, which is held in April, bring hundreds of employers to the Texas State campus. MPA and other students are able to find employment, internships and professional opportunities with the various

organizations that are represented at the Expo. Additional information about career services at Texas State can be found at the following web site.

B. Number of Graduates:

Over the last four academic years the MPA Program has graduated approximately 20 students a year. There is significant diversity among graduates. For example, in 2000-2001 approximately 68 % of our graduates were minority and 44 % were women.

Table 7.4:
Program Graduates

YEAR	Total Graduates	Minority Graduates	Female Graduates	Graduates w/ Disabilities
1998-1999	21	6	11	
1999-2000	22	10	13	
2000-2001	18	12	8	1
2001-2002	21	12	11	

C. Follow-up of Graduates

Table 7.5
Graduate Follow-up

Academic Year	ID	Employment	Gender	Race/ethnicity
2002-2001	1	Texas Southern University	Male	African American
	2	Travis County Probation	Male	African American
	3	Staff, Texas House of Representatives	Male	Hispanic
	4	Texas Workforce Commission	Female	Hispanic
	5	Texas Worker's Compensation Commission	Male	Anglo
	6	Staff, State Bar of Texas	Female	Anglo
	7	Unemployed	Female	International
	8	Center for Rural Health	Male	Anglo
	9	Southwest Texas State University	Female	African American
	10	Houston Public Transit	Male	Hispanic
	11	Staff, State Bar of Texas.	Female	African American
	12	Texas Youth Commission	Male	African American
	13	McGinnis Law Firm	Female	Hispanic
	14	City of San Marcos	Female	Hispanic
	15	Texas Animal Control and Health	Male	Anglo
	16	Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services	Female	African American
	17	American Cancer Society	Male	Anglo
	18	Covantage Inc.	Female	Hispanic

	19	Unemployed	Male	Anglo
	20	Newly married moved to Houston	Female	African American
	21	Texas Education Agency	Male	Anglo
	22	Newly married moved	Female	Anglo
	23	Law School	Male	Hispanic
2001-2000	24	State of New York	Female	Hispanic
	25	Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission	Female	Anglo
	26	Texas Health Department	Female	African American
	27	United States Air Force	Male	Hispanic
	28	Environmental Protection Agency	Male	African American (disabled)
	29	Texas Department of Transportation	Female	African American
	30	City of Raleigh	Male	Anglo
	31	Texas Association of School Boards	Male	Hispanic
	32	Southwest Texas State University	Female	Hispanic
	33	Unknown- Moved to Hawaii	Male	Native American
	34	Ph. D. Student American U	Female	Anglo
	35	Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts	Male	Hispanic
	36	Staff, Texas Senate	Male	Hispanic
	37	Ph. D. Student U of KY	Female	African American
	38	Texas Department of Human Services	Male	Anglo
	39	University of Texas	Male	Anglo
	40	HEB Food Stores	Female	Hispanic
	41	Private sector security firm	Male	Anglo
			Female	
1999-2000	42	Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse	Male	Hispanic
	43	City of San Antonio	Male	Anglo
	44	Texas A&M University System	Male	Hispanic
	45	Legislative Budget Board	Female	Anglo
	46	Texas Parks and Wildlife	Male	Anglo
	47	Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation	Male	Anglo
	48	Chief of Staff, Texas Lt. Governor	Female	African American
	49	Immigration and Naturalization Service	Male	Hispanic
	50	Texas Workforce Commission	Female	Asian
	51	Texas Comptroller	Female	Anglo
	52	Education Policy Consultant	Female	Hispanic
	53	Texas Office of the Attorney General	Female	Hispanic

	54	City of Seguin	Female	Hispanic
	55	Planner, Texas Workforce Commission	Female	Hispanic
	56	Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts	Male	Anglo
	57	City of San Marcos	Male	Anglo
	58	Austin Community College	Female	Anglo
	59	Texas Workforce Commission	Female	Hispanic
	60	Austin Affordable Housing Corporation	Male	Anglo
	61	Legislative Budget Board	Male	Anglo
	62	Texas Comptroller of public Accounts	Female	Anglo
	63	Stay at home Mom	Female	Anglo
	64	Graduate School out of state	Female	Anglo
	65	Texas Lt. Governor	Male	African American
	66	City of Austin	Male	Anglo
1998-1999	67	Travis County	Female	Anglo
	68	Bluebonnet Community Mental Health Center	Male	Anglo
	69	Texas Aerospace Commission	Male	Anglo
	70	Commissioner, Texas Railroad Commission	Male	Anglo
	71	City Manager, Dripping Springs	Female	Anglo
	72	Texas Education Agency	Female	Anglo
	73	Texas Office of Attorney General	Female	Hispanic
	74	Texas Department of Criminal Justice	Female	Anglo
	75	Hays County Probation	Male	Anglo
	76	Texas Department of Human Services	Female	Hispanic
	77	State Bar of Texas	Male	Hispanic
	78	Stay at home Mom	Female	Anglo
	79	Travis County	Female	African American
	80	Unknown	Male	Asian
	81	Unknown	Female	Anglo

2. Graduate Summary Information

Table 7.6
Employment of Graduates (1991-1999)

Employment Sector	Percent
Public	64
Non-profit	10
Private	25
Other	1
Total (n=89)	100

(Source: 2000 Alumni Survey)

Table 7.7
Ethnic Profile of Graduates (1991-1999)

Ethnicity	Percent
Anglo	69.1
Hispanic	15.9
African American	12.5
Asian American	2.5
Total (n=88)	100

(Source: 2000 Alumni Survey)

STANDARD 8.0 A.0--SUPPORT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Support Services and Mission: Mission

The facilities and budget are sufficient to support our mission of preparing students for managers and leaders in the public service. The office space and technological support make it possible for us to "rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty."⁹¹

Both the Faculty Advancement Training courses⁹² and the departmental informal technology committee that has secured internal technology equipment demonstrate our "commitment to state-of-the-art technology."⁹³ The facilities also support "links to professional associations and organizations"⁹⁴ and "focusing on continued professional development."⁹⁵

8.1 Budget

The program shall have financial resources sufficient to support its stated objectives.

A. Budget Process:

As was the case with our previous self-study (1995) the budget is prepared by the Chair of the Political Science Department. It is usually prepared in April for the coming academic year that begins in August. The Chair first consults with the MPA Director who, in turn, consults with the MPA faculty. All requirements and needs are passed on to the Chair of the Department of Political Science in the form of recommendations. The Chair completes and submits the Public Administration Budget request to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts after review and discussion.

B. Budget Sufficiency:

Funding for the MPA program is divided into two fund numbers within the larger university budget (3-1130, Political Science Department; 3-1131, Master of Public Administration Program). Faculty salaries are located in the Political Science fund.

It should be noted that Public Administration faculty often teach at the undergraduate level, the Political Science Department offers both a major and minor in public administration. Political Science undergraduate survey courses are also taught at the undergraduate level.

⁹¹ Mission Element 17.

⁹² Dr. Weinberger (LAN Administrator) is constantly upgrading the state-of-the-art computer lab with these grants. The Faculty Advancement Center often provides stipends for faculty that take classes on the internet and instruction. Dr. Tajalli, Shields and Balanoff have taken these classes. Courses are offered between semesters and during the semester.

⁹³ Mission Element 11.

⁹⁴ Mission Element 9. Examples include the Texas ASPA Conference that was held in our Student Union. and the Library facilities that we hold Advisory Council meetings.

⁹⁵ Mission Element 20. CPM Classes are often held in the library.

The seven faculty who comprise the MPA nucleus earn a total of \$392,742.00. These faculty have, for the most part, been with the department for years and thus their earlier salaries, over the past four years, would simply reflect individual merit and across-the-board salary increases. Put another way, MPA faculty have received minimum 3% per year merit and/or performance salary increases for the past four years (one of these years representing a 5% increase).

It should be noted that with respect to benefits as a percentage of salary for fiscal year 2001 the figure is 27.63% for faculty. (Note: benefits as a percentage of salary uses an employee's average salary to compute their total compensation package.)

The Master of Public Administration Fund (3-1131) provides \$8,020.00 for travel and \$10,796.00 in Maintenance & Operations 2001-2002. Much of the travel budget supports travel to off-campus sites in Austin.

Thus, we do feel that our program has “financial resources sufficient to support its stated objectives.”

C. Salary Information:

Table 8.1
FACULTY SALARY DATA (9 Months)

RANK	NUMBER	MEAN	MEDIAN
Professor	5	\$62,708.40	\$62,379.00
Associate Professor			
Assistant Professor	2	\$39,600.00	\$39,600.00
Instructor			

8.2 Library Services

All students and faculty shall have reasonable access to library facilities and services that are recognized as adequate for master's level study in public affairs and administration. This would normally include texts, monographs, periodicals, serials, pamphlets, and research reports. The program faculty should have a major role in selecting library acquisitions for its program.

A. Library Support:

Albert B. Alkek Library

The Alkek Library contains some 1,244,000 volumes of books, documents, and bound periodicals. In addition, there are some 216,800 volume equivalents in microform and 28,360 AV titles, which includes over 1,600 software programs for the public microcomputer area. The library receives over 6,000 periodical and serial subscriptions.

The library is open 104.5 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Reference service is available during all library hours. An on-line catalog that can also be accessed from off campus provides information on the library's holdings. Automated services include over 100 electronic databases and more than 765 electronic journals

Interlibrary loan and document delivery services are provided. Cooperative borrowing agreements with other libraries are maintained. Through TexShare, a statewide library resources sharing program, Texas State faculty, students, and staff can obtain a TexShare library card which grants library privileges at most of the public university and community college libraries in Texas. Library support facilities include a microcomputer lab with Macintosh and IBM compatible workstations, along with laser printers, adaptive equipment for disabled individuals, and scanners. Typewriters, coin-operated photocopying machines, public telephones, public vending machines, and a lounge are also available.

Source: Graduate Catalog: 2001-2003, p. 10 [adapted]

A PDF version of the Graduate Catalog is available at:

<http://www.gradcollege.swt.edu/CurrentCatalog/2001-2003Catalog.pdf>

Analysis

Researchers notes: Given that the field of Public Administration is eclectic, drawing from many fields, a decision was made to delimit the analysis, for the most part, to core public administration literature. Therefore, only portions of The Library of Congress Classification Outline Subclass JF, JK, JL, JN and JS were included in the analysis. Many functional Subclasses (e.g., HA, Statistics; HJ, Public Finance; HV7231-9920.5, Criminal justice administration; JQ, Political Institutions and public administration – Asia; K, Law; U, Military Science) were omitted.

The Library of Congress Classification Outline, in detail, will be found at:

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpsolcco/lcco.html>

An Alkek Library online catalog numeric search (i.e., Call Number), run by this researcher, produced the following results. It should be noted that complete loose-leaf bound documentation / hitlists will be made available for the committee's review (See Standard 8.2 A, Exhibits 1-5).

Class J -- Political Science

Subclass JF Political institutions and public administration – General
(delimited to Public Administration & Civil Service)

JF1338-2112 Public administration

JF(1411)-1521

Civil Service :347 subclass holdings--Actual range - JF1321-JF1820

See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 1 (Yellow Tab)

Subclass JK Political institutions and public administration – United States
(delimited)

JK(401)-1685 Government, Public Administration

JK501-(901) Executive Branch

JK631-(873) Civil Service. Departments and Agencies 340 subclass holdings

Actual range JK 325-JK1001

JK2403-9593 State government: 605 subclass holdings

See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 2 (Blue Tab)

Subclass JL Political institutions and public administration – Canada &
Mexico (only)

JL1-500 Canada 130 subclass holdings

JL1200-1299 Mexico 45 subclass holdings

See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 3 (Green Tab)

Subclass JN Political institutions and public administration – Europe

JN1-97 Europe (General) 131 subclass holdings

See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 4 (Purple Tab)

Subclass JS Local government. Municipal government – United States

JS55-67 History

JS141-271 Municipal government and local government other than
municipal 95 subclass holdings. Above two subclasses combined Actual
range JS13-JS221

JS300-1583 United States 480 subclass holdings. Actual range JS300-
JS1536

See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 5 (Brown Tab)

Approaching the Alkek public administration holdings, utilizing another search strategy, this researcher ran several online catalog searches (see links below). As

previously mentioned, complete loose-leaf bound documentation/ hitlists will be made available for the committee's review.

Search category Public administration
Keyword All Fields
Material Type: Book Records (621)
See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 6 (Blue Tab)

Search category Public policy
Keyword All Fields
Material Type Book
Records 1468
See Standard 8.2 A - Exhibit 7 (Gold Tab)

A few other "refined" searches yielded the following records:

- Bureaucracy 373
- Civil service 295
- Local government 606

Please remember that the above listed searches were self-limited to books in "Public administration" and "Public policy." The "hits" were not, of course, mutually exclusive in that the various database searches yielded records held in common. Other electronic databases & print journals that were reviewed include:

Indexes and Full Text Databases
Electronic Journals
Electronic Newspapers
Periodicals (print journals only listed)
Government Documents (Federal & State of Texas)

Indexes and Full Text Databases (selected)

- Catalog of U.S. Government Publications
- Congressional Universe
- Criminal Justice Periodical Index
- GPO Access
- GPO Monthly Catalog
- JSTOR (Full-text)

- Lexis/Nexis Academic Universe
- NCJRS (National Criminal Justice Reference Service)
- Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin/PAIS
- Social Sciences Full Text
- StatBank

Note: PAIS is also available as a print index in the 2nd floor Reference collection
Electronic Journals (selected)

- *Administration and Society*
- *Administrative Science Quarterly*
- *American Political Science Review*
- *Government Information Quarterly*
- *Journal of Public Economics*
- *Journal of Public Policy*
- *Public Budgeting and Finance*
- *Public Finance Review*
- *Public Performance & Management Review*
- *Public Productivity & Management Review*

Electronic Newspapers (selected)

- *Chicago Tribune*
- *Christian Science Monitor*
- *Financial Times*
- *Houston Chronicle*
- *Los Angeles Times*
- *New York Times*
- *Time Magazine*
- *Times (United Kingdom)*
- *USA Today*
- *Voice of America Audio Files*
- *Washington Post*
- *White House Summaries of Today's Press Releases*

Periodicals Collection (Following is a sample of core-related print journals.)

- *Administration & Society*
- *Administrative Science Quarterly*
- *American Review of Public Administration*
- *The Bureaucrat*
- *Canadian Public Administration*
- *Environment and Planning*
- *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*
- *International Journal of Public Administration*
- *International Review of Administrative Sciences*
- *Journal of Comparative Administration*

- *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*
- *The Journal of Urban Analysis and Public Management*
- *Management [microform]*
- *Public Administration in Israel and Abroad*
- *Public Administration Quarterly*
- *Public Administration Review*
- *Public Administration*
- *The Public Manager*
- *Public Performance & Management Review*
- *Southern Review of Public Administration*

Government Documents (Federal & State of Texas): The Government Documents collection, 4th floor, receives 60% of all federal documents and many Texas State publications produced in various formats. Obviously, there are many electronic journals that are available through direct web access (e.g., Government Technology). Thus, we feel that “the library collection relevant to the masters degree program being reviewed, such as the size of collection relevant to public policy and administration,” is adequate.

Albert B. Alkek Library URLs: Selected
Homepage/Index (<http://www.library.swt.edu/>)

Indexes and Full Text Databases (<http://www.library.swt.edu/access/e-indexes.asp>)

Electronic Journals (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ejs/index.asp>)

Electronic Newspapers (<http://www.library.swt.edu/enews/index.asp>)

Periodicals Collection: The 3rd floor Periodicals and Microform collections includes approximately 5,800 active periodical subscriptions, in addition to numerous non-active subscriptions, and microform specialty sets (such as ERIC documents, annual reports, etc.).

The Department of Political Science, as well as all other academic departments, has a faculty member who serves as a liaison to the library. All members of the Public Administration faculty have, on an annual basis, the opportunity to review our holdings and to order a new subscription if it is discovered that a core periodical is not available.

Government Documents (Federal & State of Texas)
(<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/gov-doc.asp>)

Reference Department (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/index.asp>)

Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery
<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/ill/index.asp>

Distance Education: The Alkek Library serves as the base of library services to Texas State distance students and faculty. The Alkek Library is committed to serving the Texas State distance community.

<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/dist-learn/>

<http://www.swt.edu/distanceed/>

MITC: Multi-Institute Teaching Center(<http://www.mitc.swt.edu/>)

Remote/Off-Campus Database Access
<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/index.asp#remote>

Library Instruction & Guides: (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/bi/index.asp>)

Virtual Ready Reference Links: <http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/subj-sites/ref.asp>

Dialog Searches: (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/index.asp#onl>)

Disabled Patrons (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/index.asp#dis>)

Disabled Student Services (<http://www.library.swt.edu/ref/disabled-services.asp>)

B. Library Program:

Both the Albert B. Alkek Library Acquisition and Circulation Departments, Faculty Advancement Center, Office of Sponsored Programs, Media Services and the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) contribute, in varying ways, towards “coordination between the library and program faculty in areas of acquisition, instruction and research.” Some of their activities are highlighted below.

Acquisition Department (<http://www.library.swt.edu/acq/index.asp>)

Library Research Grants: The Albert B. Alkek Library offers grant funds to faculty who need special, non- curricular materials to support their research projects.
(<http://www.library.swt.edu/grant/lib-res-grant.asp>)

Circulation Department (<http://www.library.swt.edu/circ/index.asp>)

Electronic Reserve (<http://ereserve.lrc.swt.edu/>)

Laptop Computers: Laptop computers may be checked out at the Circulation Desk in the Alkek Library by Texas State students, faculty and staff. Laptops are equipped with wireless network cards to provide a connection to the campus network from

anywhere in the library. CD-ROM, 3.5 floppy, and 100 Mb Zip drives are available. Installed software includes Windows 2000 Professional, Microsoft Office 2000 (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint), Internet Explorer 5.5, and Netscape Communicator <http://www.library.swt.edu/>

Faculty Advancement Center: The mission of the Faculty Advancement Center is to support the faculty members in their continued professional development and to support improvements in the teaching and learning environment. To actualize this mission the Faculty Advancement Center performs the following functions for the University:

- offers short courses;
 - sponsors workshops and seminars;
 - supports research and development teams;
 - provides equipment and individual training related to instructional technologies;
 - consults with faculty on formative evaluations;
 - administers instructional-enhancement grants;
 - coordinates Fulbright activities of the faculty;
 - sponsors the Presidential Seminars;
 - provides referral services to faculty seeking advancement resources;
 - joins with Media Services to establish the Alkek Technology Institute;
 - maintains an environment that promotes the exchange of ideas and expertise among faculty of various disciplines; and
 - maintains a visionary role in research and development for faculty advancement.
- <http://www.fac.swt.edu/>

Merrick Awards: The Faculty Advancement Center Advisory Committee issues a call for Merrick Instructional-Enhancement Grant Proposals each spring to fund faculty curriculum development projects during the forthcoming fall and spring semesters. Full-time faculty members with two or more years of experience at Texas State are eligible to apply. The awards provide quarter-time release from a teaching assignment to support a curriculum-development project. http://www.fac.swt.edu/Faculty%20Advancement%20Page_files/MerrickInfo2.html

Office of Sponsored Programs: The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is dedicated to helping faculty and staff at Southwest Texas State University obtain grant money from many different funding sources for advancements in research and other creative activities. OSP services include help with finding possible funding sources, help with preparing budgets and proposals, compiling and copying of a candidate's proposals, and assuring compliance with all applicable policies and procedures along the way. <http://www.swt.edu/osp/about.html>

Media Services: Media Services is a creative media department providing a wide-range of services including:

- consultation,
- creative design,
- multimedia production,
- classroom support,
- internet deployment and
- web design.

<http://www.mediasrv.swt.edu/>

Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC): The Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) offers learning support resources to improve academic skills, a service it has provided students at Southwest Texas since 1974. Any student, from freshman to graduate level, can benefit from its wide variety of programs.

<http://www.swt.edu/slac/>

8.3 Support Personnel

Adequate secretarial and clerical personnel should be available to enable the program to meet its educational objectives.

Personnel Assistance: The Political Science Department has three highly competent administrative assistants. One of these assistants is assigned to the MPA program. All three assistants are also responsive to the Chair for department-wide responsibilities (the MPA administrative assistant handles departmental travel, for instance). Student workers (i.e., work-study) are also available on a continuing basis.

Dr. Weinberger, MPA nucleus, is given release time, every semester, to serve as the LAN systems manager for the Political Science Department and is responsible for a network of over fifty computers and nine laser printers.

Texas State Staff Development Office: <http://www.swt.edu/staffdevelopment/>

Placement: The MPA program maintains a list-serve for anyone interested in receiving job Postings. A second list-serve includes, in part, CenTex ASPA events announcements. Texas State MPA faculty, students and alumni have a large presence in this Austin, Texas based chapter. Mixers are held on a regular basis.

(CenTex ASPA web site: <http://www.main.org/aspa>)

Additionally, the MPA Advisory Board presents other networking possibilities in that five of the twenty-five members are elected MPA students. Finally, the university maintains an Office of Career Services <http://www.careerservices.swt.edu/>

Development: See University Advancement:
<http://www.mrp.swt.edu/VPUA/welcome1.html>

See Alumni Office web site: <http://www.swtalumni.org/>

8.4 Instructional Equipment

Program faculty and students should have access to appropriate equipment for coursework and research, including computer facilities, visual aid devices, audio and video tapes and films.

A. Computer Support:

There are 20 Unrestricted Computer Labs throughout campus.

<http://www.swt.edu/computing/labs/UNRESTRICTED/Index.htm>

Liberal Arts Computer Lab: In FY 2000 the Political Science Computer Lab merged with the Liberal Arts Computer Lab with supervision of the Liberal Arts Lab shifting from the Department of Sociology to the Department of Political Science; both departments having “actively pursued a policy which is highly supportive of the academic use of high technology; a policy reflected in their respective “Strategic Plans.” As previously referenced, the Liberal Arts Lab is one of twenty campus-wide unrestricted labs. Public Administration faculty have twenty-four hour access to the lab. Dr. Weinberger, a member of the PA faculty nucleus, was the former Director of the lab and continues to serve as the LAN Systems Manager for Political Science.

As of this writing, the lab has twenty-four G3s and iMacs that are Ethernet-wired [10Base-T], two laser printer as well as two scanners. Recently, an internal grant entitled “Liberal Arts Lab Computer Enhancement Initiative” was awarded for almost \$30,000 and will allow us to replace sixteen of the older G3s with G4s and Dell PCs.

Supported application software includes, but is not limited to:

- Adobe Acrobat
- Adobe PhotoDeluxe
- Endnote
- Microsoft Internet Explorer & Netscape Navigator
- Microsoft Office
- SPSS
- Virtual PC
- Westlaw & ProDoc

This lab, located in ELA 224, is next to or near all MPA classrooms [ELA 222, 225, 262, 283] Faculty often bring their students into the lab for consultation/ instruction.

The MPA program maintains an extensive web site at:

http://www.polisci.swt.edu/public_administration/public_admin.html

The actual server is located in the Liberal Arts Computer Lab.

Alkek Library Microcomputer Lab (<http://www.lab.library.swt.edu/index.html>)

Instructional Technologies Support/ Academic Lab Support Computer Labs
<http://www.swt.edu/computing/labs/UNRESTRICTED/asblab.htm>

Technology Resources: Technology Resources provides a computing network, an information processing infrastructure and services to support effective teaching and research for the advancement of knowledge.

<http://www.swt.edu/computing/overview/>

Computing Environment: Technology Resources is the primary and most comprehensive provider of the campus information technology infrastructure, offering a broad spectrum of information technology services to a technically diverse spectrum of campus clients. At the most basic level, Technology Resources provide students, faculty and staff with a continuously expanding Campus Wide Network, supported by a cluster of centrally administered servers and services and a wide variety of User Support Functions and Services to maximize the value of these resources to the Texas State user community.

The following link will provide the reader with “Computing environment specifics”:

- D. Campus Wide Network
- E. The Computer Service Centers and the VMSccluster
- F. User Support Functions and Services
- G. Remote Access
- H. Electronic Communications
- I. Challenges, Opportunities, and Initiatives

<http://www.swt.edu/computing/overview/environment.htm>

Computer Replacement Program: Earlier this year, Texas State adopted and provided initial funding to begin a campus-wide formal three-year faculty and staff desktop computer refresh cycle. The purpose of the refresh cycle project is to insure that faculty and staff desktop computing devices are capable of functioning on the campus network and effectively able to run Tier 1 and Tier 2 software as listed on Texas State’s current Supported Desktop Software Initiative.

http://www.swt.edu/computing/sdsi/computer_replacement.htm

Supported Desktop Software Initiative: The Supported Desktop Software Initiative is designed to identify a core set of desktop software that faculty and staff use to accomplish everyday work activities; leverage the total purchasing power of the Texas State campus to centrally license, purchase and deploy software, thus reducing costs & facilitating compliance with state mandates regarding software licensing and inventory management; and enable the university to provide more timely and reliable technical support to software users.

<http://www.swt.edu/computing/sdsi/index.htm>

Microsoft Campus Agreement: Faculty & Staff Microsoft Campus Agreement Subscription is an annual, comprehensive licensing program specifically created to address the unique needs of higher education institutions.

(http://www.swt.edu/computing/sdsi/msca_info.htm)

Student Option: (http://www.swt.edu/computing/sdsi/msca_student_v3.htm)

B. Audio-Visual Support:

Describe audio-visual support and instructional equipment, including audio and visual equipment, tapes and films, visual aid devices, and distance learning arrangements.

All MPA classrooms have built-in or on-cart access to:

- TV/Monitors
- VCRs
- Computer with network access (all classrooms are Ethernet wired)
- Overhead projectors
- Multimedia projectors

Note: One is ceiling mounted; two are on carts.

An “Elmo” is also available. For off-campus, we have portable computers and a forth multimedia projector & roller case. TV/monitors, as well as, VCRs and overheads are available at all office-campus locations. Media Services, a creative multimedia department, provides technical support.

See, above, Standard 8.2 A.3 B, Library Services: Library Program Role.

<http://www.mediasrv.swt.edu/>

8.5 Faculty Offices

The offices for faculty should provide adequate space and privacy for student counseling, course preparation, and other faculty responsibilities.

Office Arrangements: All public administration faculty have their own private offices. Each office includes a desk, executive chair, other chairs, phone, networked computer [Ethernet-based] and file cabinet. The office of the MPA Program Director, is located in a suite of departmental offices. The Program Director is assigned a second computer that is used for program administration purposes.

Thus we feel that faculty offices do “provide adequate space and privacy for student counseling, course preparation, and other faculty responsibilities.”

Notes: See, above, Standard 8.2 A.4 A, Instructional Equipment.

The MPA faculty has been housed in the Evans Liberal Arts Building since the Spring of 1987.

8.6 Classrooms

Appropriate classrooms should be available for the courses being offered. This would normally include rooms suitable for seminars, case discussions, simulation exercises, and lectures.

Classroom Arrangements: We have wired classrooms which meet, or exceed, all of our teaching needs: seminar, moot court/simulation, lecture, computer lab. All on-campus MPA courses are taught in the Evans Liberal Arts Building. Off-campus Austin courses are taught in the Hobby State Office Building, 4th & Guadalupe as well as at the MITC: Multi-Institute Teaching Center.

<http://www.mitc.swt.edu/>

Notes: See, above, Standard 8.2 A.4, Instructional Equipment: A. Computer Support and B. Audio-Visual Support.

8.7 Meeting Area

An appropriate area should be available for students and faculty to meet informally and discuss class projects, internship experiences, and other program matters.

Meeting Area Arrangements: The Texas State campus offers many locations where students and faculty are able to informally meet. Two, in particular, include:

LBJ Student Center: The LBJ Student Center houses many retail operations such as the Texas State Bookstore. Our recreational facilities include Boko's Livingroom for your audio-visual enjoyment, and the STYX Game Room that offers pool, ping-pong and arcade games. The Parking Garage is located just outside of the Student Center, next to the central campus bus stops. There are also meeting and study rooms available for use by students and staff in various areas of the building. (<http://www.lbjsc.swt.edu/>)

Albert B. Alkek Library: Various meeting rooms and a lounge are available.

Both the LBJ Student Center and the Albert B. Alkek Library are conveniently located for our students and faculty.

Appendix A

MPA Strategic Planning Documents

Portions of the MPA Strategic Planning Document that link to the Mission Element Matrix Table 2.1

(Diversity Plans are at the end of this Appendix)

**This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 6
(an innovative curriculum)**

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 2 Increase the retention and success of students

Goal: POSI Goal 3: Encourage the development and assessment of curriculum that best meets the needs of students and also meets the standards of accrediting agencies.

Objective: Continue to review the MPA Curriculum to ensure the curriculum is consistent with the MPA Mission and meets the needs of MPA students.

Outcome: MPA curriculum that is consistent with the MPA mission.

Strategy: MPA faculty assess the MPA curriculum using mission assessment data.

Measurement: (1) Curriculum review occurred. (2) Curriculum changed to reflect the necessary changes.

Person Responsible: MPA Director and MPA Faculty

Dates Beg/End: on going

Obstacles to be Overcome:

Resources/Sources:

**This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 2
(regular course work) and Mission Element 11(commitment to state-
of-the- art technology)**

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 2: Increase the retention and success of students.

Goal: Goal 6: Implement technological policies that maximize the effectiveness of teaching and research.

Objective: Enhance web component of MPA courses

Outcome: (1) Students and potential students have better web access to MPA course materials.

(2) MPA students demonstrate technological competencies.

Strategy: Place relevant course material on the web for all MPA courses. Enhance web component of MPA courses.

Measurement: (1) All MPA courses have course material on the web.

(2) number of hits on MPA web sites

Person Responsible: Each faculty responsible for his/her own course material

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2001

Obstacles to be Overcome: Faculty web expertise.

MPA Instructional Assistant needed

Resources/Sources: Funding and time for MPA faculty training

Funding for MPA IA

This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 11 (a commitment to state-of-the-art technology)

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 2: Increase the retention and success of students.

Goal: POSI Goal 3: Encourage the development and assessment of curriculum that best meets the needs of students and also meets the standards of accrediting agencies.

Objective: (1) Identify appropriate technological competencies needed by MPA graduates.

(2) Incorporate the technological competencies into the MPA Curriculum.

Outcome: MPA Graduates are able to use current technology.

Strategy: (1) investigate which technological competencies are used by MPA graduates.

(2) Update the MPA curriculum based on the investigation.

Measurement: (1) Survey of MPA graduates indicate that they received the appropriate technological training while in the MPA Program

(2) evidence of technological competencies in Applied Research Projects

Person Responsible: MPA Director & MPA Faculty

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2002

Obstacles to be Overcome:

Resources/Sources: Work with the MPA Advisory Board to identify the needed technical competencies.

This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 9 (links to Professional Associations and Organizations) Mission Elements 18&19 (providing students and alumni with professional networking opportunities) and 20(focusing on continuing professional development)

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 1: Enhance our quality and prestige.

Goal: POSI Goal 9: Encourage political science faculty and students to broaden their educational and social commitment to the community.

Objective: Provide students and alumni professional development and networking possibilities.

Outcome: MPA students and alumni view the MPA Program as a continued source of networking opportunities and professional development.

Strategy: Ensure that MPA Program keeps its links to CenTex ASPA and other professional associations

Measurement: (1) at least one activity each year jointly sponsored by the MPA Advisory Board and CenTex ASPA (2) MPA faculty, student and alumni involvement on the Centex Board. (3) MPA faculty, students and alumni involvement in other professional associations.

Person Responsible: MPA Director and faculty

Dates Beg/End: on going

Obstacles to be Overcome: Funding for jointly sponsored professional gatherings.

Resources/Sources:

This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 11 (a commitment to state of the art technology) & Mission Element 2 (Regular Course Work)

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 4: Increase Texas State's leadership and presence in the surrounding metropolitan area, with special emphasis in North Austin and Williamson County.

Goal: POSI Goal 6: Implement technological resources to enhance core processes: teaching and research.

Objective: Enhance technological teaching applications off campus.

Outcome: Appropriate technology is easily available for off campus classes.

Strategy: Investigate and purchase appropriate technology for the classroom.

Measurement: Equipment purchased

Person Responsible: Dr. Weinberger

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2001

Obstacles to be Overcome: obtaining funds for the equipment

Resources/Sources: Funding for the equipment

**This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element almost all
of the mission elements**

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 2: Increase the retention and success of students.

Goal: POSI Goal 3: Encourage the development and assessment of curriculum that best meets the needs of students and also meets the standards of accrediting agencies.

Objective: Gather better assessment data from outgoing students.

Outcome: (1) Formal written assessment mechanism administered immediately after students complete their MPA Oral Exam. (2) Assessment information used to improve the MPA Program.

Strategy: (1) Develop and implement an exit questionnaire for MPA students administered after the Oral Examination. (2) MPA faculty discuss questionnaire results once a year.

Measurement: Oral Exam exit questionnaire administered and analyzed by MPA faculty.

Person Responsible: MPA Director

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2001

Obstacles to be Overcome:

Resources/Sources: Assistance needed for data collection, compilation and analysis

**This Strategic Planning objective links to Mission Element 7&8
(faculty scholarship and service)**

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 1: Enhance our quality and prestige.

Goal: POSI Goal 6: Implement technological resources that maximize the effectiveness of teaching and research.

Objective: Visible documentation of faculty scholarship, service and MPA Program links to professional associations

Strategy: Place all MPA faculty vita on the web (ensure that scholarship, service and professional association affiliation is included.)

Outcome: Visible ongoing assessment of faculty scholarship, service and professional affiliations.

Measurement: All regular MPA faculty vitas on the web.

Person Responsible: Each MPA faculty member responsible for his/her own vita

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2001

Obstacles to be Overcome: web expertise of faculty

Resources/Sources: web assistance needed

**This Strategic planning objective links to Mission Element 3
(Professional Development)**

STRATEGIC PLAN AY 1998-2003/FY 1999-2004

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 1 Enhance our Quality and Prestige

Goal: POSI Goal 1 Attract, retain and graduate higher quality and more diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

Objective: Pursue Ph.D. options

Outcome: appropriate Ph.D. program for Public Administration in place.

Strategy: Investigate interdisciplinary Ph. D. Option

Measurement: Program decision

Person Responsible: MPA Faculty

Dates Beg/End: 1999/2001

Obstacles to be Overcome: 1) development of interdisciplinary relationships
2) Funding; 3) staffing; 4) administrative structure.

Resources/Sources: Funding in general

STRATEGIC PLAN
Supplemental for NASPAA Accreditation: Diversity
February 4, 2002

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 3: Promote ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in Texas State community.

Liberal Arts Goal:. Promote Ethnic, Gender and Cultural Diversity in College of Liberal Arts

Objective: Hire a qualified minority faculty the next time a MPA faculty nucleus opening occurs.

Outcome: More ethnic diversity in the MPA Faculty nucleus.

Strategy: Use every means available to identify and recruit minority candidates for faculty nucleus position when available.

Measurement: Minority faculty hired as part of the faculty nucleus.

Person Responsible: Dr. Shields

Dates Beg/End:2002 end date uncertain

Obstacles to be Overcome: Hiring freezes and other constraints placed on hiring by the university, school or department.

Resources/Sources: Funding for the faculty and the faculty search

STRATEGIC PLAN
Supplemental for NASPAA Accreditation: Diversity
February 4, 2002

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 3: Promote ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in Texas State community.

Liberal Arts Goal:. Promote Ethnic, Gender and Cultural Diversity in College of Liberal Arts

Objective: Increase the number of qualified minorities that are used as adjunct professors by the MPA Program.

Outcome: Fill at least one third of adjunct faculty positions with qualified minority faculty over a school year.

Strategy: MPA Program Director and Political Science Department Chair find and hire minority faculty as adjuncts.

Measurement:. Fill at least one third of adjunct faculty positions with qualified minority faculty over a school year.

Person Responsible: Dr. Shields and Dr. Opheim

Dates Beg/End: 2002/2005

Obstacles to be Overcome: Hiring freezes and other constraints placed on hiring by the university, college or department.

Resources/Sources: No addition resources.

STRATEGIC PLAN
Supplemental for NASPAA Accreditation: Diversity
February 4, 2002

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 3: Promote ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in Texas State community.

Liberal Arts Goal:. Promote Ethnic, Gender and Cultural Diversity in College of Liberal Arts

Objective: Increase the pool of qualified minorities that can be used as adjunct professors by the MPA Program.

Outcome: Have 7 vitae on file in the Political Science Office of qualified adjunct minorities.

Strategy: MPA Faculty and Advisory Board make every effort to identify and contact qualified minorities and ask them to submit their vita for consideration as adjunct professors in the MPA Program.

Measurement:. Have 7 vitae on file in the Political Science Office of qualified adjunct minorities.

Person Responsible: Dr. Shields

Dates Beg/End: 2002/2005

Obstacles to be Overcome: Hiring freezes and other constraints placed on hiring by the university, college or department.

Resources/Sources: none. MPA Faculty will be alert and solicit vitae from qualified minorities as they go about their professional lives.

STRATEGIC PLAN
Supplemental for NASPAA Accreditation: Diversity
February 4, 2002

Texas State Goal/Objective: Goal 3: Promote ethnic, gender and cultural diversity in Texas State community.

Liberal Arts Goal:. Promote Ethnic, Gender and Cultural Diversity in College of Liberal Arts

Objective: Increase the number of qualified minorities that are used as graduate adjunct professors during oral examinations for the MPA Program.

Outcome: Have 15 minority graduate adjunct faculty résumé's and University approval's on file in the MPA Office. Use minority graduate adjunct faculty on at least one third of all oral examinations each semester.

Strategy: Find more qualified minorities willing to serve on oral examinations.

Measurement:. Have 15 minority adjunct faculty résumé's and University approval's on file in the MPA Office. Use qualified minority graduate adjunct faculty on at least one third of all oral examinations each semester.

Person Responsible: Dr. Shields and Dr. Opheim

Dates Beg/End: 2002/2005

Obstacles to be Over come: none

Resources/Sources: No addition resources.

Appendix B

Advisory Council By-Laws

List of Advisory Council Members

Appendix B

BY-LAWS

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

MPA PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL (Amended March 27, 1999)

I Name

Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program Advisory Council,
hereafter referred to as the Council.

II Purpose and Function

The Council serves as an advisory body for program activities including, but not limited to the following: curriculum development; program improvement; liaison and networking for program graduates; assistance with new student orientation; and career development. Goals and objective for the Council will be set and assessed annually.

III Membership

There shall be three classes of membership in the Council: regular, student, and faculty.

- a) The Council is authorized to include up to 25 members, elected or appointed for terms of three years in length. A member may serve two consecutive terms on the Council. They shall serve staggered terms, one-third of the terms expires each year. The term membership shall begin on September 1st and end on August 31st.
- b) Practitioner members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by a majority of the members present and voting at the Council meeting prior to September 1st each year.
- c) Five student members shall be elected by the MPA Program students in the Spring of each year. Applicants for the student member positions shall be solicited from students enrolled in the MPA program each fall.
- d) Faculty members shall be appointed by the MPA Program Director with approval of the Political Science Department Chair.
- e) Faculty members of the Council shall be without a vote.

- f) Members shall attend Council meetings as scheduled. Members shall attend meetings of committees to which the member is assigned. A member shall notify the Chair or Program Director if he or she is unable to attend a scheduled meeting. It is grounds for removal from the Council if a member cannot discharge the member's duties for a substantial part of the term for which the member is elected or appointed because of illness or disability, is absent from more than half of the Council and committee meetings during a calendar year, or is absent from at least three consecutive Council meeting.

IV Officers

The officers of the Council shall be: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The Immediate Past Chair may serve as an ex-officio member of the Council. All elected officers shall be elected for a term of one year in which elected.

- a) The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Council, assist in the achievement of its goals, and appoint committees to assist in the achievement of those goals.
- b) The Vice Chair shall preside and exercise the powers of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and shall succeed to the Chair upon the death or resignation of the Chair to fill the term.
- c) The Secretary shall take the minutes and record the proceedings of the Council. The minutes shall be approved at the next regular meeting of the Council.

V Meetings

Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least three times each year. The time and place of each meeting shall be designated by the Chair in concert with the wishes of the Council and the Program Director. Special meetings may be called by the Chair. A quorum qualified to take action for the Council shall be one-third of the voting members of the Council. The vote of a majority of the members present and voting at a meeting shall constitute the decision and the action of the Council.

VI Committees

- a) **Standing Committees** - The newly elected Chair shall appoint the following standing committees except the Nominating Committee. The Chair may appoint non-council members to committees as ex-officio members.
- 1) **Executive Committees** - The Executive Committee shall consist of the:, Secretary, Program Director, and the Immediate Past Chair of the Council. The Executive Committee shall administer policies of the Council and

shall, between scheduled meetings of the Council, serve as the chief administrative authority of the Council. The Executive Committee may act by majority vote of its members present at a meeting in person, by a majority written consent of its members, or by majority vote of its members polled by telephone.

2. **Program Trend Committee** - The Program Trends Committee shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Council regarding changes in public administration professional practice, i.e., biannual review and recommendations on course content, course currency and new courses. The committee shall consist of five practitioner members, one student member, and a faculty member.
3. **Student Committee** - The student Council shall consist of all MPA Program Advisory Council student members. The Student Committee shall devise goals and objectives within two months of the first Advisory Council meeting for the term of service which shall include, but not to be limited to projects, and student activities. The Student Committee shall provide a goal summary at the end of the term of service which addresses the results of the proposed goals and objectives. The following documents, the names of the Student Committee members, the goals and objectives, and the summary, shall be submitted by the Student Committee for each term of service. Moreover, said documents shall be archived in a notebook, held by the MPA Director, and the notebook shall be available to all interested parties. The Student Committee will inform MPA students of Advisory Council meetings by providing a written summary of Advisory Council issues. Student members shall be elected by the MPA Program students in the Spring of each year. Applicants for the student member positions shall be solicited from students enrolled in the MPA program each Fall.
4. **Student Orientation/Alumni Committee** - The Student Orientation/Alumni Committee shall consist of two practitioner members, two student members, and one faculty member. The Student Orientation/Alumni Committee shall be responsible for making recommendations for the development and operation of the Council's annual orientation for new MPA students. The Student Orientation/Alumni Committee shall work with the Program Director to schedule and conduct the annual orientation. The Student Orientation/Alumni Committee shall promote activities to involve alumni in program activities and support.
5. **Nominating Committee** - The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members purposed by the Chair and elected at the Spring Council meeting. The committee shall be responsible for making recommendations to the Council on candidates to fill practitioner member

positions and Council offices. The Nominating Committee shall contact each person whom it wishes to nominate, in order to obtain his or her acceptance of nomination. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be made at the meeting prior to September 1 each year.

- b) **Ad hoc Committees** - The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees as needed. The size and composition of the committee shall be at the discretion of the chair. Ad hoc committees may include members of the Council, faculty from the Political Science Department, and, with the approval of the Council, persons other than members of the Council.

VII Parliamentary Procedure

In the absence of any provision to the contrary in the By-laws, all business meetings of the Council, of the Executive Committee, and of the special committees shall be governed by the parliamentary rules and usage contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

VIII Amendments

Amendments to these By-laws may be initiated by any member of the Council and presented at any meeting of the Council if notice of the proposed amendment or amendments is contained in the written notice of such meeting. For adoption of a proposed amendment to these By-laws, a majority vote of the membership of the Council shall be required.

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Spring 2002

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Appendix C

Applied Research Projects that Assess the MPA Program

Appendix C
Applied Research Projects that Assess the MPA Program

- 1993 Terry Beck, "A Content Analysis of Applied Research Projects Completed 1987-1991 in the MPA Program at Southwest Texas State University."
- 1997 Ana Almaguel, "Research in Public Administration: A Content Analysis of Applied Research Projects Completed From 1992-1996 at Southwest Texas State University - Master of Public Administration."
- 1999 Mary Gute, "A Comparison of Master Level Research Projects in Public Administration and Public Affairs Programs in Central Texas."
- 2000 Cindy Cavazos, "Gauging Alumni Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Masters of Public Administration Program at Southwest Texas State University in Meeting Its Mission."
- 2002 Bruce Hermes, "Government Employer Assessment of the Texas State MPA."
- 2002 Karla Corpus, "A Descriptive Study of Psychological Writing Problems: What Kind of Writing Problems Affect Graduate Students in Public Administration/Affairs Programs?"

In 1994 Carl Nall assessed Professional Reports at the LBJ School

Carl Nall, "Research in Public Administration Public Affairs: An Analysis of Professional Reports at the LBJ School of Public Affairs 1988-1990."

In 1999 John Paddenbergh surveyed the members of CenTex ASPA. This ARP was an indirect assessment of the networking and professional development portions of the MPA Program mission. John's presented his results to the CenTex Board meetings.

John Paddenbergh "Assessment of the Centex Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration."

Appendix D

Award Winning Applied Research Projects

Appendix D
Award Winning Applied Research Projects

Pi Alpha Alpha Student Manuscript Award Winners

- 1998 Kevin Baum. "Group Dynamics & Power Structures: Toward a Greater Understanding of the Line-Staff Relationship Within the Austin Fire Department."
- 2000 Shivaun Perez. "Assessing Service Learning Using Pragmatic Principles of Education: A Texas Charter School Case Study." This paper is also in Volume 2 of the *Pi Alpha Alpha Journal*.
- 2001 Ana Lisa Garza. "Developing a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) Model for Southwest Texas State University." This paper is also in Volume 3 of the *Pi Alpha Alpha Journal*.

McGrew Public Policy Research Award (CenTex ASPA)

- 1997 Ralph Revello. "A Descriptive Analysis of Computer Security Measures in Medium-Sized Texas Counties."
- 1998 Rebecca Short. "A Content Analysis of Texas State Agency Employee Handbooks." (Student Category)
- 1999 Carey Welebob. "Description of Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Division Staff Perceptions Regarding Officers Carrying Firearms in the State of Texas." (Student Category) **and** Southeast Conference on Public Administration Policy Research Award
- 2000 Christine McCormick, "Intensive Supervision Probation: Assessing Texas Programs." (Student Category)
- 2001 Jena Whitley Pratt. "The Behavioral Assessment and Intervention Mandates of the 1997 Amendments to IDEA and Implications for Special Education Programs" (Student Category)
- 2002 Timothy Wilson. "Pragmatism and Performance Measurement: An Exploration of Pragmatic Practices in Texas State Government" (Student Category)
- 2002 Dee Ellis (D.V.M.). "Carcass Disposal Issues in Recent Disasters, Accepted Methods, and Suggested Plan to Mitigate Future Events." (Practitioner Category)

Appendix E

2000 Alumni Survey Selected Results

Appendix E
2000 Alumni Survey
Selected Results

In 2000 Alumni that had graduated between 1991 and 1999 were surveyed. Cindy Cavazos performed the study as her Applied Research Project. Cindy developed her instrument from the NASPAA curriculum standards, the mission and a former alumni survey. Surveys were sent to 149 alumni and 91 were returned (61% response rate). Information contained in the survey is summarized in Tables E.1 through E.5. Overall, alumni assessment of the program was positive.

Table E.1
Overview Curriculum and Course Offerings

Questionnaire Item (n=91)	SA	A	n/o	D	SD	% Total
Frequency of courses was Sufficient	31.9	61.5	0	5.5	1.1	100
Courses were offered at convenient times	44.0	52.7	0	2.2	1.1	100
Curriculum Balance between theoretical and applied approaches	27.8	49.9	8.9	12.2	2.2	100
Curriculum was diverse	12.1	59.2	15.4	12.1	1.1	100
Program provided preparation for Applied Research	33.3	46.2	7.7	11	2.2	100
Ethics played a central role	19.8	52.7	8.8	26.5	2.2	100
Program offered Innovative Curriculum	16.5	49.5	16.5	16.5	1.1	100

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; n/o = no opinion; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table E.2
Items Specific to the Curriculum

Questionnaire Item	E	G	F	P	U	% Total
Decision Making/Problem-Solving (n=89)	21.3	55.1	19.1	4.5	0	100
Finance (n=90)	27.8	51.1	16.7	4.4	0	100
Human Resources (n=88)	19.3	45.5	23.9	9.1	2.3	100
Organization Theory (n=88)	26.1	47.7	19.3	5.7	1.1	100
Policy Process (n=90)	28.9	45.6	23.3	2.2		100
Intergovernmental Relations (n=90)	26.7	38.9	27.8	5.6	1.1	100
Ethics (n=89)	31.5	46	12.4	7.9	2.2	100
Information Systems/Technology (n=89)	14.6	41.6	31.5	11.2	1.1	100
Applied Research (n=90)	62.2	20	12.2	4.4	1.1	100

E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor; U = Undecided

Table E.3
Leadership and Management Preparation

Questionnaire Item	E	G	F	P	U	%
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(n=91)						Total
Management Preparation	23.1	51.6	13.2	5.5	6.6	100
Leadership Preparation	24.2	48.4	16.5	4.4	6.6	100

E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor; U = Undecided

Table E.4
Faculty and Networking

Questionnaire Item (n=91)	E	G	F	P	U	% Total
Faculty Accessibility	30	46.7	20	2.2	1.1	100
Faculty Preparation	46.2	48.4	4.4	1.1	0	100
Knowledge of Subject Matter	63.7	35.2	0	1.1	0	100
Interest in Student Development	46.2	35.2	14.3	3.3	1.1	100
Student Interaction	17.8	37.8	34.4	10.1	0	100
Networking: Interaction with PA professionals	7.8	40	33.3	13.3	5.6	100
Networking: Interaction with PA Associations	20	31.1	33.3	10.0	5.6	100

E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor; U = Undecided

Table E.5
Recommend Program

Questionnaire Item	Yes	No	Neutral	% Total
Would Choose Program Again	81.3	7.7	11.0	100
Would Recommend Program to Others	89.0	3.3	7.7	100

Program indicators pre and post mission

The mission process was completed in 1998. Hence, most of the alumni were in class prior to the mission statement being put in place. We were curious whether there would be any indication of program improvement that occurred after the mission was developed. Tables E.6 and E.7 examine selected indicators pre and post mission development. Alumni that had graduated after the mission statement was developed were more likely to view the curriculum as “innovative,” that it “balanced theoretical and applied approaches” and to believe that the program “prepares leaders for public service.” They were also more likely to maintain that the program did a “good” or “excellent” job interacting “with professional associations,” and that faculty student interaction was more likely to be “good” or “excellent.”

Table E.6
Overview Curriculum and Course Offerings :

Comparison Pre and Post Mission Development

	1993- Grads	1997 n=61		1998- Grads	1999 n=29	
Questionnaire Item	SA	A		SA	A	
Frequency of courses was Sufficient	29.5	63.9		37.9	55.2	
Courses were offered at convenient times	58.6	34.5		37.7	60.7	
Curriculum Balance between theoretical and applied approaches	30.0	40.0		24.1	65.5	+
Curriculum was diverse	11.5	55.7		13.8	65.5	
Program provided preparation for Applied Research	37.7	41.0		24.1	58.6	
Ethics played a central role	19.7	54.1		20.7	51.7	
Program offered Innovative Curriculum	18.0	42.6		13.8	65.5	+

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree

Table E.7
Comparison Pre and Post Mission Development

	1993- Grads	1997 n=61		1998- Grads	1999 n=29	
Questionnaire Item	E	G		E	G	
Management Preparation	23.0	52.5		24.1	51.7	
Leadership Preparation	26.2	44.3		20.7	58.6	+
Faculty Preparation	44.3	47.5		51.7	48.3	
Knowledge of Subject	60.7	37.7		69.0	31.0	
Faculty Accessibility	26.7	53.3		37.9	35.5	
Student Interaction	18.3	33.3		17.2	48.3	+
Interested in Student Development	49.2	32.8		41.4	37.9	
Decision Making/Problem Solving	23.7	52.5		17.2	62.1	
Finance	35.0	45.0		13.8	65.5	
Human Resources	22.4	39.7		13.8	55.2	
Organization Theory	27.1	47.5		25.0	46.4	
Policy Process	33.3	41.7		17.2	55.2	
Intergovernmental Relations	30.0	40.0		20.7	34.5	
Ethics	39.0	33.9		17.2	72.4	+
Information Systems/Technology	13.3	40.0		17.9	42.9	
Applied Research	61.7	25.0		65.5	10.3	
Interaction with PA Professionals	8.3	36.7		6.9	48.3	
Interaction with PA Associations	15.1	31.7		31.0	27.6	+

E = Excellent; G = Good

Appendix F

Government Employer Assessment Of the Texas State MPA

Appendix F

Government Employer Assessment Of the Texas State MPA

Bruce Hermes

Spring 2002

Abstract and Conclusion

Abstract

Universities today have more reason than ever before to document the results of their efforts. Accreditation bodies require evidence of assessment. Some state legislatures require outcomes assessment of public universities. The general business environment has organizations reaching out to customers to learn about themselves and how they can improve. For all these reasons, universities and their academic programs are attempting to learn about themselves from various stakeholders, including employers.

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at Southwest Texas State University (Texas State) shares in the need for assessment. This program confers about twenty MPA degrees each year. This study reports the results of a series of interviews with government executives to explore the program's outcomes in the eyes of government employers. The interviews explored awareness of the MPA degree, the value of the Texas State program curriculum, including the core curriculum as specified by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the Texas State MPA program mission statement, and other areas of skill and knowledge identified in a review of related academic literature. Further, the research explored how well the graduates measure up to the ideals of these government employers. Finally, the interviews sought suggestions from the government executives on how to improve the program. The interviews showed that government executives value most of the curriculum of the Texas State MPA program highly and believe that its graduates represent a high quality degree program. The research also uncovered several interesting and useful suggestions for improving the program.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This chapter consists of conclusions reached from the research questions, as well as recommendations for the Texas State MPA program and for further research. The recommendations for further research will be divided into suggestions on how replicated research might be improved and on new research questions and methodologies.

Awareness of the MPA Degree

Government managers and executives are well aware of the existence of the MPA degree. However, the degree seems seldom to be a job requirement, and public administrators are likely not to be aware of the particulars about the curriculum. Working Hypothesis WH1, which asserted, “government executives are unaware of the existence or content of the MPA degree” was not supported by the research findings.

Value of the NASPAA Core Curriculum

Working Hypothesis WH2 is that government executives place high value on each of the areas of knowledge in the NASPAA core curriculum. All of the knowledge and skills of the NASPAA core curriculum were valued by the respondents. No respondent felt that any of the core curriculum areas was without value. Each respondent viewed the core curriculum from his or her own job requirements and gave high value ratings to different items accordingly. The least valued areas for the sample of respondents were those concerning computers, economic institutions and processes, and legal institutions and processes. However, even these least valued areas were valued at or above a neutral rating by all participants.

The rankings of value by the respondents could be used as a guide in allocating classroom time to the various topics. By such a scheme, relative amounts of class time would be given in this order:

1. Decision making and problem solving
2. Human resources
3. Program implementation and evaluation
4. Organization
5. Budget
6. Policy
7. Political institutions and processes
8. Social institutions
9. Computer literacy
10. Economic institutions and processes
11. Legal institutions and processes

The conclusion is that Working Hypothesis WH2, that government executives place high value on each of the areas of knowledge in the NASPAA core curriculum, is supported. As would be expected, some minor variation in the level of value for each item exists. To put it simply, this research supports the value of the NASPAA core curriculum.

Value of Additional Texas State MPA Mission Outcomes

Working Hypothesis WH3, that “government executives place high value on areas of knowledge and skill outcomes espoused by the Texas State MPA program mission statement” was partially supported by the research. One item that is covered by the Texas State MPA program mission statement but not covered in NASPAA’s bullet point list of core curriculum is ethics. The single most highly valued knowledge area in the research project appears to be ethics. This rating, though in the context of a separate question group from the NASPAA core curriculum, enjoyed a level of support that would probably exceed that of all the other core curriculum components if they were directly compared.

The Texas State MPA mission to provide networking opportunities received a relatively low level of support from the respondents in general, but one respondent considered it a top-tier item. Other respondents considered it in the neutral middle ranking. The Texas State MPA program mission item “integrating theoretical and practical approaches to public management” ranked lowest among the group of knowledge and skills derived from the program mission statement and the additional items uncovered in the literature review. Theory may not hold as high a value to the practitioner employers as it would for academicians.

It should be pointed out that Working Hypothesis WH3 is not concerned with the success of the Texas State MPA program in meeting its mission, but instead with the value of certain elements of the mission statement itself. The research findings show that some parts of the mission statement, though outcome-oriented, are of little value to employers.

Value of Additional Areas of Knowledge and Skills

Working Hypothesis WH4, that “government executives place high value on additional areas of knowledge and skills,” was partially supported by the research. The effective listening skill, identified in the literature review as a trait of general value to employers, was given one of the highest value rankings in its grouping. The preponderance of respondents ranking this high in its group is noteworthy. Following with a high ranking are the presentation/speaking skills and writing skills. Of relatively lower importance is the value of time management skills.

Knowledge and Skills of Texas State MPA Graduates

Working Hypothesis WH5, that “government executives whose organizations have Texas State MPA graduates within them believe that the Texas State MPA graduates have the knowledge and skills needed by government careerists,” is supported by the research. While several of the respondents spoke glowingly of the several Texas State MPA program graduates known to them, none of the respondents could report deficiencies among the graduates. The most frequently mentioned strengths of the program are the breadth of understanding of public administration the graduates have and the pragmatic orientation of the program and its graduates.

Respondents felt that the program lived up to its mission of serving Central Texas and preparing graduates for careers in public service.

Summary Conclusions about the Working Hypotheses

The research demonstrated a mix of support for the five working hypotheses. Working Hypothesis WH1 (unawareness of the MPA degree) was the only working hypothesis that was not at all supported by the research. The other four working hypotheses were supported to some level by the research, though some were only partially supported. Most clear is that the NASPAA core curriculum requirements are highly valued by government executives and that Texas State MPA graduates are highly regarded by government executives who have association with them. The research conclusions are summarized in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1. Research Conclusions		
Working Hypothesis		Comments
WH1: Government executives are unaware of the existence or content of the MPA degree.	Not supported	Respondents felt that government executives are generally aware of the MPA degree, but probably have little awareness of the curriculum components.
WH2: Government executives place high value on each of the areas of knowledge in the NASPAA core curriculum.	Supported	All the components of the NASPAA core curriculum are valued. Most highly valued areas of knowledge are decision making and human resources.
WH3: Government executives place high value on areas of knowledge and skill outcomes espoused by the Texas State MPA program mission statement.	Partially supported	Ethics is extremely highly valued by respondents. At the other extreme, respondents hold almost no regard for “integrating theoretical and practical approaches to public management.”
WH4: Government executives place high value on additional areas of knowledge and skills.	Partially supported	Communication skills, including presentation and speaking skills, writing skills, and listening skills, are highly valued.
WH5: Government executives whose organizations have Texas State MPA graduates within them believe that the MPA graduates have the knowledge and skills needed by government careerists.	Supported	All respondents hold Texas State MPA graduates and the Texas State MPA program in high regard.

Recommendations for the Texas State MPA Program Curriculum

The research results indicate that the Texas State MPA program is well regarded by the interviewees. Occasionally the respondents explicitly or implicitly made generalized comparisons of the graduates of the Texas State MPA program to the graduates of another master's program oriented toward public service, and the Texas State MPA graduates compared very favorably. There is strong indication that much of what the Texas State MPA program is doing should be continued. One respondent who was familiar with the prizes won by Texas State MPA capstone papers praised the structured guidance given these papers as superior.

There was a noteworthy lack of support for parts of the mission of the Texas State MPA program. This research would suggest that the program should reexamine the mission statement, with an eye toward fine tuning the language that espouses integration of theoretical and practical approaches to public management.

The interview respondents rated writing skills highly. And the Texas State MPA program places a strong emphasis on writing in its capstone applied research project. The emphasis on writing skills could be strengthened throughout the program by assuring that writing assignments are returned with constructive feedback to students, rather than used solely as a technique for assessing student learning.

The substantive suggestions that would represent change for the program are reiterated in the following list:

- Include coverage of media relations
- Include coverage of nonprofit management
- Use more high-level practitioners in instruction
- Include material on dealing with elected policymaking bodies
- Provide more feedback on student writing.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research project was built keeping in mind the successes and failures of predecessor research into both employer perceptions of college graduates in general and other research on MPA education. The researcher did indeed find that the challenges to earlier research again appeared during the course of this research. For example, Texas State MPA graduates offered themselves in response to the e-mail broadcast asking for interviewees. But when it was explained that the researcher needed employer interviewees free from the bias of affiliation, several of these initial replies vanished without a referral. Such obstacles to bias-free sampling were suggested by the literature. The literature assumes that bias appears because alumni are only willing to share supervisors' names when the supervisor is thought likely to say positive things about the graduate employee. In the course of this research, an issue came up about the length of the interview, and a new explanation for alumni reluctance to share supervisor names comes to mind. It could be that graduate employees are reluctant to visibly add to their supervisors' workloads. Either a referral for an interview or the inclusion of the employee's name on a survey instrument would show that the graduate employee was adding additional burdens to the supervisor's busy schedule. Future researchers should consider this change of assumptions in designing bias-free and valid sampling methods.

The literature also suggested that survey respondents are indiscriminately complimentary of a program or named graduate. That was not exactly the case here, but there was low differentiation in the values assigned to the core curriculum requirements of NASPAA. This researcher interprets the generally high set of marks as meaning that NASPAA has appropriately set the core curriculum requirements.

To improve the research, several "dos and don'ts" are offered here. First, government executives and managers are busy people, so it is important that the interview be kept brief. A brief interview will help assure that the interview is minimally intrusive, but the promise beforehand of a brief interview will help the interviewer assure that an interview is even scheduled. Early requests for a one-hour interview met some resistance, but a half hour interview met almost no resistance. In any case, some interviewees had no problem with speaking for nearly an hour. With brevity of interview in mind, the researcher should be willing to tolerate a certain number of "double-barreled" questions⁹⁶. Also for the sake of brevity, future researchers should consider either narrowing the research to the employers' values of curriculum elements or an institution's success in educating its graduates on already-established valued curriculum elements. A study that is intended to explore both the values of curriculum elements and the quality of graduates might use separate respondents for the two types of data.

Future researchers should be cautioned to word their interview questions extremely carefully. In this research questions on "human resources" might better have been rephrased as being about "human resource management," to assure that questions were not about knowledge of the people in the organization, but instead about

⁹⁶ Double-barreled questions are acknowledged to be poor methodology in surveys, but surveys can usually be designed with somewhat less concern about the respondents' time constraints than are interviews. If double-barreled questions are to be tolerated at all, the compound components of the question must be closely related. I think they are here, in part in that they are double-barreled in NASPAA's core curriculum.

management practices. Standard definitions for each of the topic areas should be ready in case interviewees ask for clarification. A number of interviewees had questions about what was meant by “legal institutions,” or “social institutions” as examples.

Overall, the research technique used in this paper appears to provide meaningful data, which is admittedly difficult to quantify. One of the most difficult obstacles in employer research is that the employers do not know much about the academic program of their employees, and that consequently, it is difficult for them to know if employee traits were gained through the education program or through some other means. Perhaps future research could be more inclusive of those alumni who have been out of school long enough to temper their perceptions of the education experience with their work experience. The feedback of such alumni could have the benefits of valid knowledge of the education program as well as the realities of the workplace. While feedback gathered in such a way would be worthless for comparing schools, it would have a high value in fine tuning individual education program

Appendix G

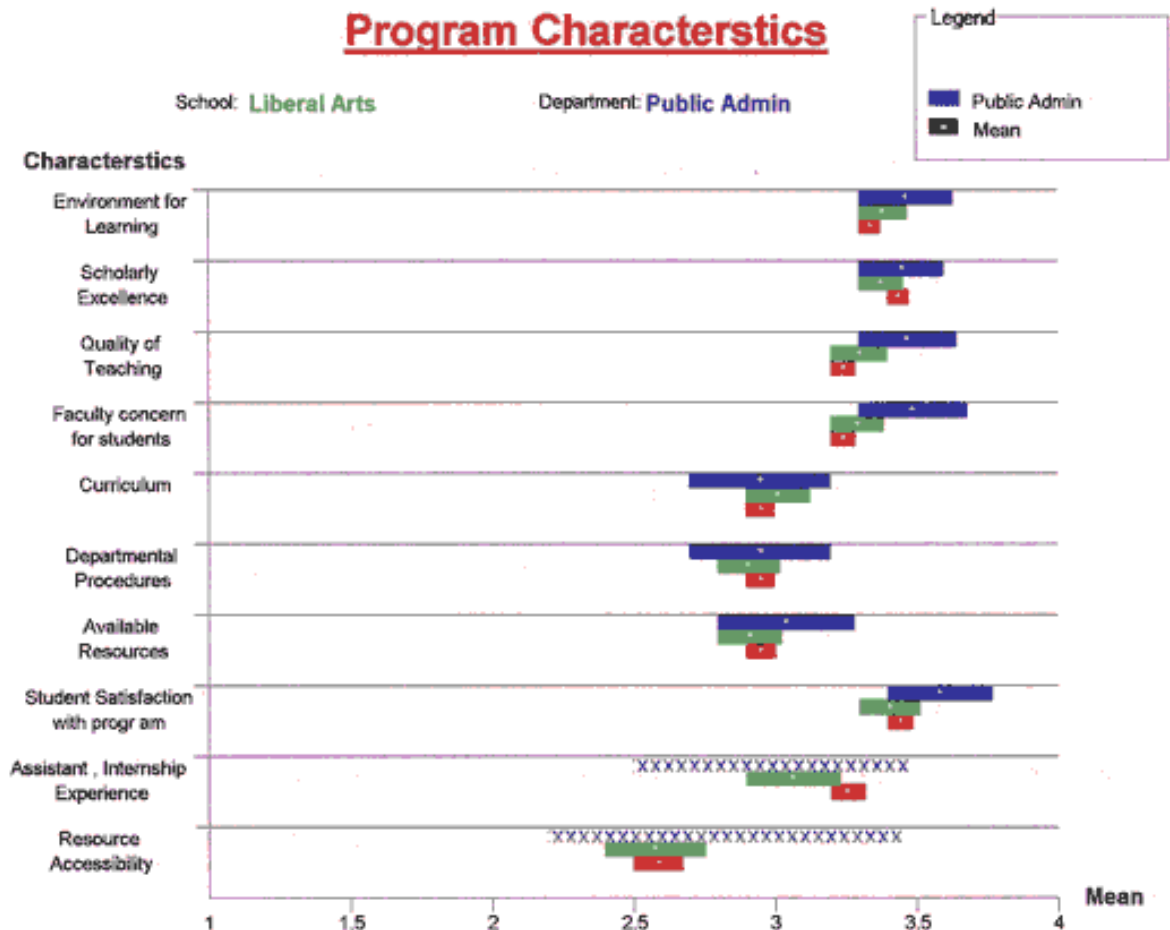
Graduate College Office of Academic Assessment Exit Survey

Appendix G

Graduate Program Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Graduate Record Examinations Board and the Council of Graduate Schools cosponsor the Graduate Program Self-Assessment Service for masters programs. The Graduate Program, Self Assessment (GPSA) questionnaire is designed to assist graduate institutions and departments in the self-study and review of their graduate programs. The underlying assumption is that the perceptions and judgments of students can contribute to a better understanding of the functioning and quality of the department or master's program. The questionnaire is used to collect program self-assessment information on an anonymous and confidential basis. The questionnaire includes items that address the 10 program characteristics highlighted in Figure G.1. The questionnaire contained 4 to 8 items for each of the scales. This data was made available for the 1997 – 1998 academic year (n=23).

Figure G.1



The results reveal that the Texas State MPA program is quite strong. On five of the ten characteristics the mean was 3.5 (on a 4 point scale) and was at or above both the

University mean and the Liberal Arts mean. The highest mean (3.7) was “student satisfaction with program.” Other factors with high scores are “faculty concern for students,” “quality of teaching,” “scholarly excellence,” and “environment for learning.” Factors with lower scores (3 on a 4 point scale) are “curriculum,” “departmental procedures,” and “available resources.” It should be noted that no MPA Program means were below the University or Liberal Arts means. Tables G.1 and G.2 provide results for selected GPSA items.

Table G.1
Graduate Program Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Selected Results

Questionnaire Item (n=23)	SA	A	D	SD	% Total
Questions about Faculty					
There is good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs, concerns and suggestions. (1-16)	48	48	4		100
Faculty members prepare carefully for their masters level courses(1-10)	58	42			100
Faculty members are genuinely interested in the welfare and professional development of masters students. (1-1)	65	35			100
There are opportunities outside the classroom for interaction between masters students and faculty (1-16)\	51	26	18	6	100
Questions about department/program					
The department is receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things (1-14)	48	52			100
The department actively helps graduates of the masters program, find appropriate employment (1-9)	26	30	22	22	100
Department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect between students and professors (1-4)	70	30			100
The department is an intellectually stimulating place in which to study	65	35			100
The program is providing me with very good preparation for my future professional work. (1-12)	52	48			100
I have learned a great deal as a masters student in the program (1-5)	78	22			100
Questions about personal decisions/experience					
If I were to start over I would enroll in this program again. (1-11)	73	18	9		100
I would advise a friend with similar interests to study in the department/program (1-6)	78	18	4		100
Masters students support and help each other meet the academic demands of the program (1-7)	70	22	8		100

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table G.2
Graduate Program Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Selected Results

Questionnaire Item (n=23)	E	G	F	P	%* Total
Questions about Faculty/teaching					
Accessibility of faculty members to masters students in the program (2-15)	70	30			100
Faculty helpfulness in dealing with classwork (2-24)	60	40			100
Faculty awareness of new developments in their field (2-25)	48	30	9	9	96
Useful faculty criticism of work (2-23)	48	42	5		95
Teaching methods used in graduate courses(lectures, seminars...) (2-14)	48	48	4		100
Scholarly and professional competency of the graduate faculty in the program (2-8)	66	25	9		100
Evaluation procedures used (by faculty) in graduate courses (grades, papers) (2-13)	48	48			96
Questions about department/program					
Flexibility of the program to meet the needs of individual masters students (2-18)	42	26	18	9	95
Intellectual environment (of program) (2-1)	35	61	4		100
Depth in subject matter of masters level course and program offerings. (2-17)	34	58		8	100
Agreement between degree requirements and stated objectives of the program (2-3)	43	52	5		100
Opportunities for intellectual and social interaction among persons in the program (2-34)	13	58	22	4	97
Scholarly and professional promise of masters students in the program (2-10)	44	52			96
Variety of masters level course and program offerings (2-16) (Note this appears to be a trend university wide)	39	30	22	9	100
Curricular and career advising (of program) (2-2) (Note this appears to be a trend university wide)	23	30	25	12	100
Administration of degree requirements (by program) (2-4)	42	52	5		100

E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor;

* If percent less than 100, the remaining observations were “no response.”

Appendix H

Admission Justification Form

Appendix H

Admission Justification

Date: _____

Name of Student: _____

Social Security Number: _____

GRE Score: _____

A three member committee of MPA faculty has met and recommends that the above named student be admitted to the MPA Program for the _____ semester.

Justification:

Committee:

Appendix I

MPA Student Exit Survey

Appendix I
Exit Survey

Table I.1
Student Assessment of Knowledge Areas

The MPA Program contributed to my Knowledge in this area (n=32)	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Total
Decision making—Problem Solving	62.5	31.3		6.3		100
Financial Administration	37.5	59.4	3.1			100
Human resource Administration	53.1	43.8	3.1			100
Policy Process	53.1	43.8	3.1			100
Intergovernmental Relations	59.4	34.4	3.1	3.1		
Ethics	75	21.9	3.1			100
Information System/Technology ⁹⁷	40.6	40.6	9.4	9.4		100
Public Management	49.9	50	3.1			100
Organizational	59.4	34.4	3.1	3.1		100
Applied Research	90.6	9.4				100
Law	40.6	50	6.3	3.1		100

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = neutral D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table I.2
Student Assessment of Skill Development

The MPA program contributed to the development of my skills (n=32)	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Total
Writing	90.6	9.4				100
Quantitative Analysis	71.9	28.1				100
Oral Communication	62.5	34.4		3.1		100
Ability to function in a team	50	31.3	12.5	6.3		100
Financial analysis	37.5	56.3	3.1	3.1		100
Presentation	56.3	40.6		3.1		100
Interpersonal relations	50	34.4	9.4	6.3		100
Project management	65.6	31.3		3.1		100
Supervisory	34.4	43.8	15.6	6.3		100
Program evaluation	59.4	25	9.4	6.3		100
Assessment	59.4	34.4	3.1	3.1		100
Use of technology	34.4	50	9.4	6.3		100

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = neutral D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table I.3
Student Assessment: Mission Statements

Statement: The MPA Program (Mission elements are numbered See Table 2.1) (n=32)	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Total
11. is committed to state of the art technology.	50	46.9		3.1		100
12. emphasizes the central role of ethics in public service.	68.8	28.1	3.1			100
13. reinforces the use of technology in management.	50	43.8	6.3			100
17. enables rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty.	68.8	28.1		3.1		100
18. Providing students with professional networking opportunities	56.3	31.3	6.3	6.3		100
20. focusing on continuing professional development	53.1	43.8	3.1			100
21. emphasizes management in political institutions and processes.	65.6	31.3	3.1			100
22. integrates theoretical and applied approach to public management.	75	25				100
23. prepares students for careers as managers in public service.	71.9	28.1				100
24. prepares students for careers as leaders in public service.	65.6	34.4				100

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = neutral D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Appendix J

Summary: Linking the Mission and Assessment Data

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Table J.1
Linking Mission and Assessment Data

Mission Element	evidence			
	Alumni Survey	GPSA* Survey	Exit Survey	Other evidence
The Program primary serves:				
1. the diverse community that is Central Texas.				Most students reside in Central Texas, Most alumni are employed in Central Texas
Such service is provided through:				
2. regular course work	supports	support	support	Employer Interviews supported the curriculum
3. professional development	support		support	
4. internships				
5. Applied Research Projects.	supports		support	Awards Content analysis of Applied Research Projects
The Program responds to the changing environment through:				
6. an innovative curriculum	support		support	
7. faculty scholarship,		support		Record of scholarship among faculty
8. faculty service,				Record of service among faculty
9. links to professional associations and organizations			support	Association with CenTex & Advisory board
10. interaction with governmental agencies,				Faculty Research Oral Exam committees in State Capitol & City Hall; Close contact with CenTex
11. a commitment to state-of the-art			support	Resources and processes devoted to continually

technology.				upgrading technology
Mission Element Table J.1 (cont.)	Alumni Survey	GPSA Survey	Exit Survey	Other evidence
The Program is distinguished by:				
12. emphasizing the central role of ethics in public service,	support		support	Employer interviews Frequently mentioned during Exit interviews
13. reinforcing the use of technology in management,			support	
14. providing opportunity to a diverse student body,				Diversity records of students and alumni
15. delivering classes at convenient times and locations,	support			Frequently mentioned during exit interviews
16. offering a variety of career support areas,	support			10 career support areas
17. enabling rich and frequent contacts between students and faculty,	support	support	support	Frequently mentioned at Exit interviews
18. providing students with professional networking opportunities,	Failed to support		support	Mentoring Mixers MPA-L notice of CenTex events Practitioners on Oral Exam committees
19. providing alumni with professional networking opportunities,	Failed to support			Mentoring mixers MPAGRAD-L notice of CenTex events
20. focusing on continuing professional development,			support	
21. emphasizing management in political institutions and processes			support	
22. integrating theoretical and applied approaches to public management.	support		support	Employer interviews questioned the importance of this item.
23. Prepare students as managers in the public service	support		support	
24. Prepare students as leaders in the public service	support		support	

* GPSA Survey was not tied to the Mission.