Master of Public Administration (MPA)
The University of Alaska Southeast, School of Art and Science
AY 2018-2019 Annual Report on Program Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

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1. Program Description (yellow font marks the unfinished parts)

Introduction. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) began in 1972. Since then, the program development went through several distinctive phases. The last program redesign was implemented in AY 2017-2018, with a new curriculum, new concentrations, a new six-year sequence, and improved courses' content and eLearning delivery methods.

In AY 2018-2019 focus was on the program visibility through intensified marketing and increased institutional awareness at UAS and UA levels, providing performance metrics for the MPA program:
- The MPA Team developed a **strong marketing presence and improved communication** with students interested in the MPA Program. The comprehensive information about the MPA program were posted in the user-friendly manner at UAS website. Using customized reports and alerts from the Salesforce system, the Program Coordinator had prompt information about students acquiring information and/or starting the admission process into the MPA program. This allowed targeted and engaging communication with prospective students. The overall result was **the increased admission**.
- The MPA program performance metrics (admission, enrollments, and graduation numbers) were "buried" into Business and Public Administration department's statistics that was based on combined undergraduate and graduate numbers, hiding the MPA statistics and trends. Program Coordinator "extracted" related MPA numbers and made them available, along with the short overview of the MPA program specifics and strengths. This increased the program visibility at UAS and especially at the UA level, as a part of the MPA input to UA Academic Restructuring process and data.

Program goals: developing workplace competencies. UAS MPA program learning goals are based on the program mission, our public service values, and competencies required by professional standards (NASPAA – Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration). The MPA curriculum is developed to include required competencies in five domains, including the ability to:
1. Lead and manage in public governance;
2. Participate in and contribute to the policy process;
3. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
4. Articulate and apply a public service perspective;
5. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Program design. The MPA degree prepares students for leadership at all levels of government and in non-profit organizations. It is designed for working professionals who seek to increase knowledge, competences, workplace skills and credentials in public administration. The MPA program combines the relationships and structure of the traditional classroom with the accessibility of a distance-delivered program to create a stable, supportive, and high-quality education. The MPA program is committed to practitioner-oriented instruction, flexible and convenient e-Learning, and offering courses relevant to students in the State of Alaska and the Yukon Territory.

2. MPA Program Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Program Level Student Learning Outcomes: Upon graduating from the UAS MPA program, students will be able to learn, value and demonstrate the following:
1. Identify and analyze a current issue in public policy or public administration topic through the integration of relevant theory and practice.
2. Integrate knowledge across public administration areas and select and apply appropriate frameworks to identify and address public administration problems and or opportunities.
3. Examine specific topics in public administration through the lens of core MPA program areas, especially addressing the interconnected nature of public organizations.
4. Integrate findings on democracy, including the political environment and civic engagement, using multiple perspectives and praxis as a framework to analyze a public program or organization.
5. Demonstrate professional writing skills, effective communication, and the ability to present, using best practices in public administration.

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for specific courses are aligned with the PLOs.

PLOs assessment has three dimensions:
1. Direct measures (observations) evaluating the capstone course, where PLOs are the framework for the grading rubrics and evaluation criteria.
2. Direct measures (observation) of major assignments (tests, case studies, reflection papers, final projects, presentations) in specific courses, supporting PLOs.
3. Indirect measures (perception), of how students, employers, and alumni feel about the learning experience and quality in the MPA program, through anonymous student ratings, various surveys, focus group, time to degree, job placement and career advancement data.

3. How the data is collected on the Program SLOs

We are collecting the following group of empirical and statistical data:
1. Graduation data
2. Admissions data, as a reflection of the program market value.
3. Enrollment data
4. Capstone grades
5. Student rating results
6. Tuition revenue and the MPA Program financial power

4. The data collected on the Program SLOs during the previous academic year

4.1. Graduation Data

Fiscal Year	Number of Students
2017	23
2018	33
2019	28

4.2. Admission Data in AY 2018-2019

Year	New Students
2017	31
2018	27
2019 (until July)	33

4.3. Enrollment Data in AY 2018-2019

Element	Students Headcount (Taken "Seats")	Student Credit Hours (SCH)
Summer 2018	73	219
Fall 2018	149	447
Spring 2019	128	384
Total	**350**	**1,050**

4.4. Capstone Grades (Grades from 1 to 4, 4 – Highest)

Element	Number of students	Average Grade
Summer 2018	10	3.75
Fall 2018	11	3.65
Spring 2019	11	3.80
Students / Average Grade	**32**	**3.73**

(*) PADM 690

4.5. Student rating results   (Rating from 1 to 5, **5 – Highest**)

Element	Average Rating
Summer 2018	4.76
Fall 2018	4.50
Spring 2019	4.78
Courses / Average Rating	**4.65**

4.6. Tuition Revenue

- **Total number of students enrolled in the MPA Program: 147**
- Comparison with the UAA MPA Program: UAA MPA has 44 students enrolled.
- **Total tuition revenue power** (147 students x36 credits x $513 = $2,714,796
- **Total revenue from the course enrollments' fees** in the AY: 1050 SCH x $513 = $538,650

5. An evaluation of data collected on the Program SLOs during the AY 2018-2019

Public Administration Capstone. The most comprehensive and direct evaluation of PLOs is based on the capstone grades, student rating, and qualitative comments. **The average capstone grade is 3.73**, which is above our high target level of 3.5. **The average capstone student rating is 4.83**, which is excellent.

In the AY 2018-2019, **the average student rating for all courses is 4.65**, which is a **very high level (93%).**

During the advising process with students, we are collecting students' perceptions about the program content, structure, and delivery. Along with anonymous comments in students' ratings, this provides quality information about ways to improve and develop the program.

The MPA program's outputs (data), and outcomes (anecdotal information collected through the interviews and surveys about job-placements, career advancements, professional networking, and employers' satisfaction), provide an analytical foundation to support the finding that the MPA as a very successful, and sustainable program.

6. Plans to improve student learning

We have identified the following improvements that we believe will benefit our students:
- To share among the MPA faculty students' major comments and suggestions, expressed through student ratings, during the advising process, directly to the program coordinator, and collected through our anonymous surveys.
- Share best practices in developing courses' content, structure, and delivery.
- Evaluating and improving current practices and internal MPA policies for interacting with students, including setting required email turnaround time, requiring class announcements be posted at least once a week, implementing standardized grading rubrics, providing detailed assignments instructions.
- Complete an exit survey with graduate students (job placement, career advancements, job-related skills, and competencies).
- Complete an annual anonymous survey among all MPA students, using open questions and seeking comments about the MPA program. Courses, instructions, and suggestions for improvements.
- Based on the MAP program performance metrics, survey's findings and another insights, seeking the MPA Advisory Committee perception and suggestions about the program output, outcomes, and impact, market needs and new opportunities.

7. Conclusion

The Master of Public Administration program's assessment data and evaluations confirms and validate the assessment report's summary statement:
- The MPA program is going strong, increasing its UA, UAS, and market visibility;
- Effective admission, advising, and marketing activities resulted in increasing the number of new students admitted in the program and the course enrollments;
- The results of PADM courses outcomes evaluation confirms the program continuing to be very successful in achieving defined student learning outcomes at the program and course levels.

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