

Master of Public Administration (MPA)
The University of Alaska Southeast, School of Art and Science
AY 2017-2018 Annual Report on Program Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Prepared by the MPA Faculty Team:

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1. Program Description

Introduction. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) began in 1972. Since then, 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. This redesign is the result of comprehensive efforts to addressing changes in the professional and economic environment, identify market trends, and to meet specific needs related to non-traditional students and adult learning. Consequently, the MPA team re-defined the program strategic elements, including the program mission, professional value, program goals and the student learning outcomes at the program and course levels.

Mission. The MPA program creates a community of leaders who network across the State of Alaska and the Yukon Territory to address the organizational and managerial issues in the public and non-profit sectors through the practical application of innovative problem-solving strategies. The program helps to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for public administration leaders to address current local, state and national issues and to help citizens shape the future of governance in Northern communities.

Our public service values. The core public service values of the MPA are reflected in the five commitments articulated in the Code of Ethics of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA):

1. Serve the Public Interest
2. Respect the Constitution and the Law
3. Demonstrate Personal Integrity
4. Promote Ethical Organizations
5. Strive for Professional Excellence

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 Capstone grades
- 2 Average grades from all courses
- 3 Specific exams and test results closely related to PLOs
- 4 Student rating results
- 5 Graduation data
- 6 Enrollment data
- 7 Admissions data, as a reflection of the program market value.

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

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

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Average Grade</i>
Summer 2017	17	3.53
Fall 2017	12	3.40
Spring 2018	7	3.80
Students / Average Grade	36	3.54

(*) PADM 690

4.2. Average grades from all courses in AY 2017-2018 (Grades from 1 to 4, 4 – Highest)

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Average Grade</i>
Summer 2017	62	3.69
Fall 2017	75	3.74
Spring 2018	73	3.55
Students / Average Grade	210	3.65

(*) PADM 601, 604, 610, 622, 624, 625, 628, 635, 637, 638, 662, 663, 671 (JD1-JD3), 688, 690

4.3. Specific exams and test results closely related to PLO in AY 2017-2018

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Average Grade</i>
Public Financial Management	34	3.04

(*) PADM 628 – Public Financial Management

4.4. Student rating results

(Rating from 1 to 5, 5 – Highest)

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of courses</i>	<i>Average Rating</i>
Summer 2017	3	4.86
Fall 2017	9	4.84
Spring 2018	9	4.57
Courses / Average Rating	21	4.73

(*) PADM 601, 604, 610, 622, 624, 625, 628, 635, 637, 638, 662, 663, 671 (JD1-JD3), 688, 690

4.5. Graduation data

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Summer 2017	11
Fall 2017	12
Spring 2018	10
Total	33

4.6. Enrollment data

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Summer 2017	62
Fall 2017	75
Spring 2018	73
Total	210

4.7. Admission Data in AY 2017-2018

<i>Element</i>	<i>New students</i>
Fall 2017	6
Summer 2018	13
Spring 2018	10
Total	29

5. An evaluation of data collected on the Program SLOs during the AY 2017-23018

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 3.54**, which is above our high target level of 3.5. The average capstone student rating is 5.00, which is excellent.

In the AY 2017-2018, **the average grade is 3.69** (on the scale 1-4), which is above our high target level of 3.50. **The average student rating for all courses is 4.64**, which is a **very high level (92.86 %)**.

The graduation rate is 22.3% (33 students graduated in the AY, from 148 students registered and active in the program. In the same period, 28 new students were admitted to the program. Enrollment numbers are also steady: there are 210 students, which is similar to previous AY 2016-2017.

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 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:

- Create a policy for sharing and reviewing student course ratings and incorporating improvements into faculty annual activity plans and reports.
- Share the students' major comments and suggestions, expressed through student ratings, during the advising process, or directly to the program coordinator, or faculty.
- Share best practices in developing courses' content, structure, and delivery.
- Develop an MPA policy for responding to student complaints.
- Implement a course syllabi template.
- Formalize current 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 alumni survey (job placement, career advancements, job-related skills, and competencies)
- Advisory Committee perception 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 continuing to be very successful in achieving defined student learning outcomes at the program and course levels.