

Annual Program Assessment Report

Department of Business and Public Administration

Master of Public Administration – AY23-24

1. Brief Program Overview

In March 2024, a memo was sent to the Provost requesting the MPA program be paused, effective summer 2024, to allow for the program to be reviewed and revised due to low enrollment and declining admissions interest (See appendix A). The memo was crafted after discussion and review by the faculty and staff of BPA (See appendix B).

Late in AY23-24, a committee that included the MPA faculty, MPA coordinator, BPA advisor, and the BPA strategic consultant began meeting to explore ideas and set forward a plan for the summer of 2024 to meet the deadlines to submit the new program, new courses, and revised courses to the curriculum committee. The proposal was presented to the MPA advisory committee who supported the pause.

As the program has been paused for a year, and redesigned, the annual program assessment report presents the request for the pause, which provides the assessment of the program. We also present the revised proposed program that has been approved through the Graduate Curriculum Committee. The scheduling for the program was implemented in AY24-25 and will be assessed during the upcoming year to see how well the goals of increased course enrollment and new student enrollment has been met.

2. Program Level Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Note whether the PLOs listed in the UAS Course Catalog (CourseLeaf) are correct and written properly (measurable outcomes, not all starting with “students will”, etc.). If applicable, list the date corrected in Courseleaf.

- to lead and manage in the public interest;
- to participate in, and contribute to, the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment;
- to articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective;
- to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

3. How the data is collected on the PLOs (rubrics, portfolios, etc.)

Data was not collected for this assessment year beyond what is presented in Section 6 – Conclusions and plans for program improvement.

4. The data collected on the PLOs during the previous academic year (assessment period)

Data was not collected for this assessment year beyond what is presented in Section 6 – Conclusions and plans for program improvement.

5. An evaluation/analysis of the data collected

Program paused to allow for redesign. Please see Appendix C below.

6. Conclusions and plans for program improvement

Between 2020-2024, enrollment dipped in the MPA program by nearly 50%, going from 67 enrolled students to 35. While we expect that part of this was a function of the COVID-19 pandemic, the enrollment has not rebounded at all, and in fact has continued to drop. This decline, combined with limited resources, has required us to reimagine and update a more robust, current and nimble program, pausing admissions until Fall 2025.

In May 2024, the BPA department chair, MPA faculty, BPA advisor, and strategic consultant met to discuss the plans for program improvement. Participants agreed that the purpose was to strengthen / reimagine the program, recognize contributions from current faculty, understand workloads, and provide support as we work to improve. The plan for the group was to evaluate the MPA structure and curriculum. The plan and purpose was presented to the MPA Program Advisory Council who provided additional suggestions for the group to consider when creating graduate certificates and attracting students to the UAS program.

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Student Enrollment by Major

Spring 2023 Open Freeze

Current Term UAS Trends Demographic Trends Minors & Concentrations

Select Term	Select Freeze	Headcount	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Student Credit Hours	2023
Spring	Open	(Blank)	57	54	41	35	28	(Blank)	185

Filter By

Campus: All Full/Part-Time: All Degree: 5.Masters

Department & Program: Dept. Bus. & Public Admin.

Program Detail

Primary Major: MPA Public Administration, Higher Education

Filter by Primary and/or Secondary major. This applies only to the program detail table.

New/Returning Status

#	%

Full-time/Part-time Status

#	%

Alaska Native Students

#	%

Home Campus

#	%

Sex

#	%

Age

#	%

Class Standing

#	%

Origin at Entry


#	%

Appendix A – Request to Pause MPA Program



SCHOOL OF
ARTS & SCIENCES

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TO: Dr. Maren Haavig, Provost
THROUGH: Carin Silkaitis, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences
FROM: Faculty, Department of Business and Public Administration
through the BPA Chair, Dr. Kristy Smith 
RE: Pause in MPA Program Admissions, effective Summer 2024
DATE: March 19, 2024

Dean Silkaitis:

Thank you for taking time to meet with the MPA program faculty, BPA Program Chair, BPA Program Advisor, and BPA Strategic Consultant on March 4, 2024, to discuss the proposal to pause MPA Admissions for the upcoming academic year.

As presented in that meeting, the MPA faculty and BPA department respectfully request a pause in admissions for our MPA program effective Summer 2024, for one academic year, as we work to review and renew the business graduate program at UAS. The request aligns with our BPA Strategic Plan and has the buy-in of the MPA faculty and adjunct faculty.

We want to ensure that graduates are equipped with the most relevant and comprehensive skill set to address the complex demands of public service in the present and future, and work to create a pathway between BPA undergraduate and graduate offerings, student pathways, and faculty utilization.

If you would like additional details or if you have any questions, please let us know. Thank you for your support of BPA.


Appendix B – BPA review of the MPA program

MPA Program **Pause**



Kristy Smith <ksmith26@alaska.edu>

to Shayla, Paulette, Kathy, Michael, Colleen, L.J, Carla, Sherry, Carin, Michele ▼

 Mar 20, 2024, 2:32 PM



Hi everyone! MPA faculty and adjunct met a few weeks ago to discuss the future of the MPA program. After that meeting, Kathy, Shayla, and I, along with Michele Thornton met with the Dean and Associate Dean, and presented a plan for how we could **pause** admissions to the program for one year to do a deep dive and review of the program (see attached). What we plan is to only **pause** admissions for the next academic year. Classes are still being offered for all MPA students and we plan to continue to offer PADM classes while the review takes place.

Kathy, Michele, and Shayla are meeting tomorrow to discuss communication to the students *and* getting students enrolled in classes that will go toward the degree. I am sending this email now as the Provost has notified Admissions and the Registrar that she is approving the **pause**.

We can discuss further at our meeting next week. Thank you all for your support and please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Kristy D. Smith, DM, SPHR®, SHRM-SCP
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One attachment • Scanned by Gmail 



Appendix C - Assessment of Program generating a pause

Growing the Master's in Public Administration (MPA) at the University of Alaska Southeast

The faculty and adjunct faculty members of the MPA program met on February 23, 2024, to discuss the program's current situation, identify a strategic direction and determine operational needs for the upcoming academic year. Following that the MPA Program Coordinator met with the BPA Chair and the Strategic Consultant. Both groups discussed current challenges and a set of strategies/timeline to ensure that Graduate Education at UAS is forward-thinking, innovative, and sustainable. We want to ensure that graduates are equipped with the most relevant and comprehensive skill set to address the complex demands of public service in the present and future.

Current Situation:

- After decades of offering the program and putting hundreds of MPA graduates into leadership and management positions in local and state government and nonprofit organizations, the MPA has recently faced declining enrollments.
- One tenured associate MPA professor is retiring in May 2024 and the second full-time tenured faculty member is the precondition to recovering and stabilizing the MPA program along with two, long-term adjunct faculty who provide instruction in critical core courses. However, this creates challenges for bandwidth, service load and program administration.
- Student expectations for diversity in course topics are not being met in the current UAS MPA program so they are taking their tuition elsewhere to get the variety they want to fulfill their educational goals.
- Currently there is a disconnect between undergraduate and graduate offerings, student pathways, and faculty utilization.

Proposed Responses:

Immediate Steps/Requests (Spring/Summer 2024):

- Pause program enrollment for 12 months
- Begin re-imagining, re-designing, and evaluating the MPA program with external resources (see below), stakeholder input, engaging with aspirational programs etc. (Refresh and update the MPA curriculum to reflect a general public administration focus, connection to the undergraduate curriculum and include graduate certificate options that stack into the full-time program and is a part of the MPA program's flexible framework strategy).
- Cancel 601 for Summer & Fall, re-evaluate offerings for both terms given faculty resources and student needs. Finalize course sequencing for existing students, including

development of new electives to support students and new certificate(s). (i.e. Social Capital, Inclusive Leadership, etc)

- Intentional outreach to admitted program students that are not enrolled in classes (~100 students) - Outreach Coordinator/Advising
- Develop graduate certificate to submit Fall 2024
- Engage Advisory Council to provide input and direction
- Examine opportunities to have faculty teach across programs

Fall 2024:

- Move courses taught by retiring MPA faculty to Spring
- Submit program changes & certificate to curriculum committee
- Launch electives to support graduate certificates and aid in offerings to existing students, and test/pilot for refresh.
- Examine faculty resources & expertise for the future. Determine when the right time to search for and recruit a replacement for the full-time tenure (or term) faculty who is retiring. Determine faculty workloads that align with the needs of the program core and elective course offerings, curriculum development, recruitment and advising.

Spring 2025:

- Launch marketing campaign with newly redesigned programs. (Increase visibility of and recruitment opportunities into the MPA program by featuring stories and testimony from MPA students and graduates that hold high positions in the government as a part of the aggressive professional BPA marketing project.)
- Strengthen the network within BPA resources, ongoing cooperation with online programs at other UA institutions and Yukon University.
- Engage with the activities of the BPA/SofCE outreach coordinator position to communicate with prospective employers, especially those providing funds for employee's advanced education and professional development.
- Enroll new cohort for Fall 2025

Program Requests to Administration:

\$20,000 commitment for training and research opportunities (i.e., travel to an institution with a successful program; bring in a professional from a successful program; etc.) and provided professional development for BPA Chair and MPA Coordinator - some ideas are presented below

\$3,000 per person - <https://learnmore.duke.edu/certificates/inclusive-leaders>

\$400 per course/per person -

<https://foster.uw.edu/executive-edu/diversity-equity-inclusion-certificate/> Three courses needed to obtain the certificate.

Here is a link to the best MBA in Public Administration. It was difficult to find just MPAs from US News and World -

<https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/mba/public-administration-rankings>

Preliminary Strategic Questions to Examine Moving Forward:

1. **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Clarify the potential target audiences for graduate education in BPA.
2. **CURRICULUM:** Align a more specialized and advanced curriculum with contemporary challenges, emerging trends and evolving best practices in public administration through full program and stackable short-term graduate certificates. Focus on developing leadership and strategic management skills, addressing the specific challenges faced by experienced professionals in mid to high level positions including case students, real-world projects and advanced coursework.
3. **DELIVERY FORMAT:** Delivery format designed with the needs of working professionals in mind. Offer part-time or flexible schedules, allowing students to continue working while pursuing their degree. The curriculum may also incorporate executive education elements, such as networking opportunities and interaction with experienced professionals.