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**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW  
INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT FORM**

This form is composed of three parts: the Program Section, the Dean Section, and the Provost Section. Guidance for submission is provided in each section.

**Using the Form:** The form is pre-loaded with information specific to each program and posted on the [Program Review website](#). The program should download and save their form to begin using it. The form is locked, so instructions are viewable and the only sections of the document that can be edited are the form fields.

The form uses narrative, text, and drop-down boxes. Narrative boxes have a character limit, which includes spaces. When using text and drop-down boxes, if you want to undo an answer, press "Control-Z" or "Command-Z."

Responses are to be narrative only, and must be ADA and FERPA compliant. Do not embed any links, including to webpages or other documents. To be FERPA compliant, do not include the names of any current or former students. Rather, use statements such as, "In AY21 four program graduates were accepted to graduate programs in the field." Programs with specialized accreditation or other external recognitions must comply with restrictions regarding what can be published, as per the accreditor or external organization. Do not include appendices. Appendices to this form will not be accepted.

**Assistance:** For technical assistance with this form, email Academic Affairs ([uaa.oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.oaa@alaska.edu)).

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**Submission Date:** 3/1/2021

**Name and title of person(s) submitting the report:** Chad Briggs, Director of Graduate Studies, CBPP

**Program(s) in the report:** MPA Public Administration

**Specialized Accrediting Agency (if applicable):** N/A

**Campuses where program is delivered:**  Anchorage  KOD  KPC  MSC  PWSC

**Year of last review:** AY2020

**Final decision from last review:** Revision

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**PROGRAM SECTION**

*After completing the Program Section, the program should email this form to the dean, and copy [uaa.oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.oaa@alaska.edu) for posting. If the program is delivered on a community campus, copy the appropriate community campus director(s) as well.*

**For each current recommendation listed below, provide a timeline for addressing the recommendation, an indication of how you will know when the recommendation has been successfully achieved, a brief description of actions taken to date, and any evidence that the actions have been successful. Programs**

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can access current data on the [IR-Reports Program Review site](#).

**Recommendation 1: Decrease time to degree to five semesters on average. To accomplish this, one of the things the program must do is remove the emphases areas. The revision should be completed in AY21 for implementation in fall 2021.**

**Timeline (2000 characters or less)**

Early February 2020- expedited program review sent by CBPP regarding the MPA.

Late February - MPP degree approved by UA Regents.

Early March- MPA faculty visited UAS to agree on course planning and coordination between the two MPA programs.

Summer 2020- new Arctic Security course (BA A490A) began as a temporary course.

Spring term 2021- PADM A651 and revised PADM A632 began. PADM A650 to begin spring 2022.

**How will you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? Include description of data or metrics used and method used to determine success. (2000 characters or less)**

Reviewing new student graduate study plans, full-time students are able to complete the degree in 4 semesters under the current curricula structure and new agreements with UAS (see below). Average time of actual graduate depends upon student choice, and many have scaled back semester course commitments during the pandemic.

Determining success of this recommendation depends upon its intent. If we are to measure average student graduation, regardless of other factors, then a 30-credit degree and complete restructuring of the MPA would be required (see below). However, these other factors include student learning outcomes tied to accreditation standards, student interest in time-to-degree as the overriding factor for enrollment, and a budget break-even analysis of costs. On this last point, UA alternatives were found for courses that were difficult to staff in the management emphasis, and overall requiring 36 credits does not impose any more costs to UAA than a 30 credit option (but would lose tuition revenue and possibly enrollment). Further, the phaseout period of the emphases would take at least 3 years, during which time enrollment in affected courses would decline significantly.

**Actions taken to date and evidence of success to date. (2000 characters or less)**

1. Cooperative agreements made with UAS-MPA to share course resources and coordinate availability of 'bottleneck' courses where UAA could not justify providing on its own. This allows Management emphasis students to continue HR and management courses without delay or pressure on UAA, and increases predictability of CBPP course scheduling.
2. Confirmed with UAF and UAS that required criminal justice courses would be provided with no delay to students or required resources from UAA. Enrollment in the CJ emphasis increased by 60% with new students in AY2020.
3. Discussed discontinuation of Health emphasis with Dean of Graduate Studies- decision to delay until after the pandemic, and then revisit necessary training required for the state.

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4. Increased availability of MPA course electives (PADM A650, 651, 632, BAA490A) with start of the MPP.
5. Discussed sharing PADM courses with UAF Natural Resource PhD program, to share policy and administration courses no longer available at UAF SOM. This would increase enrollment in MPA/MPP courses at UAA.
6. CBPP and ISER have been integrating research proposals with both the MPA and MPP programs, funding graduate research assistants from the students. Two began in 2020, while there are currently 13 other RAs budgeted in proposed or pending National Science Foundation projects.
7. Began discussion of joint accreditation of the MPA program with UAS, and jointly participated with UAS MPA in the NASPAA accreditation workshop in September 2020. Removing emphasis areas from the UAA MPA was advised against by NASPAA, as a 'vanilla' 30 credit MPA would not contain all required elements of NASPAA learning objectives and elective expertise. A 36-credit single track would essentially be the same as the current MPP, and so would decrease overall enrollment. Either way, removing emphases from the MPA would require completely restructuring the degree. A NASPAA advisor said that, at least unofficially, UAA had the choice of either creating a 30-cr.

**Future actions to take, if applicable. (2000 characters or less)**

1. Possible phase-out of the Health administration emphasis, in cooperation with the MBA program and College of Health, to take place once attention on the pandemic will not negatively impact such restructuring on UAA public affairs.
2. Continued planning for cooperative course sharing with UAS, UAF, and a timetable to be set for joint UAA/UAS MPA NASPAA accreditation.
3. Continue efforts to cross-over courses between the MPA, MBA, and MPP courses in CBPP.

**Recommendation 2: Address specific issues with regards to faculty resources and program sustainability to increase number of majors.**

**Timeline (2000 characters or less)**

(As above)

**How will you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? Include description of data or metrics used and method used to determine success. (2000 characters or less)**

The concerns over faculty resources and program sustainability are directly linked to recommendation #1. The UAA MPA program has focused on leveraging the resources available elsewhere in the UA system, most notably and substantively by cooperating with the UAS MPA program, but also including UAF and the other graduate programs inside CBPP (MBA). The new MPP program was designed to combine resources between the MPP and MPA, and there are now more course options available to MPA students, and more reliable access to required courses, without increasing numbers of faculty.

The pandemic has made comparisons with other years unreliable, but admissions to the MPA in fall

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2020 were up 66% from the previous year according to IR data, with a small number of new MPP students also enrolling in PADM courses. MPA applications for fall semester (as of Feb 26) are up 200% over the same time last year (9 versus 3), and each prospective applicant speaks to the grad director and grad coordinator via Zoom. While these numbers are still substantially lower than 10 years ago, the program can hope to achieve higher enrollments by emphasizing the school's expertise in Alaska and Arctic policy (via the MPP), as well as resources and expertise from the MBA.

**Actions taken to date and evidence of success to date. (2000 characters or less)**

(Please see actions taken for Recommendation #1)

In addition, social media advertisements were used in summer 2020 to advertise the MPP/MPA, online outreach events were held (expert discussions, publicly available lectures, etc.), and news media interviews related to the pandemic were given. Online social events for graduate students were started in December 2020 and will continue through the summer.

**Future actions to take, if applicable. (2000 characters or less)**

1. Re-establishment of a graduate advisory board for the MPA and MPP, in cooperation with retired faculty, university advancement, and ISER faculty. This meant to increase community involvement with degree mission definition, learning objectives in line with employer needs, and outreach/networking.
2. As above, increase cooperation with other UA schools and programs, including but not limited to UAS MPA, UAF Natural Resources, UAA MBA, and in the post-pandemic transition, determine access issues as CBPP returns to face-to-face instruction.

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**DEAN SECTION**

*After completing the Dean Section and signing it, the dean should email this form to the program, and copy [uaa.ooo@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.ooo@alaska.edu) for posting. If the program is delivered on a community campus, copy the appropriate community campus director(s) as well.*

**For each recommendation, comment on the progress to date and provide commendations and guidance as appropriate. (2000 characters or less for each recommendation)**

***Recommendation 1: Decrease time to degree to five semesters on average. To accomplish this, one of the things the program must do is remove the emphases areas. The revision should be completed in AY21 for implementation in fall 2021.***

The MPA program was in need of leadership to steward it into a new era. Dr. Chad Briggs was hired for this purpose near the end of the Expedited Program Review process. Since then, Dr. Briggs has identified parameters and program limitations that might not have been known during the EPR process. This new information suggests a different outcome than the EPR recommended. For example, conversations with the accreditor for this program, NASPAA, reveal that a 36-credit program is likely needed for accreditation and that emphasis areas allow the program to stand out. Also, it appears that the most likely reason for students taking longer than 5 semesters was not

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emphasis areas but the the scheduling of courses being offered. Through better scheduling of courses internal to CBPP and better coordination with external partners, the path to graduation is clearer.

I fully support keeping the emphasis areas for now and reassessing the Health Administration emphasis in one year.

**Recommendation 2: Address specific issues with regards to faculty resources and program sustainability to increase number of majors.**

CBPP internal coordination with the MBA and MPP programs has increased the sustainability of the MPA without additional costs. In addition, Dr. Briggs has formed partnerships with programs at UAF and UAS that increase opportunities for our students and increasing enrollment in some of our courses. Also, Dr. Briggs and other MPA/MPP faculty have been engaged in high-profile programs and events in the Arctic and DC that raise the visibility of the program.

Through these efforts, the MPA has seen an increase in enrollment and applications during a pandemic year when much of the university has seen declines.

**Dean's overall recommendation to the provost:** Follow-up Program Review in AY25.

**If recommending Suspension with Follow-up Program Review, that review will need to be in AY2022 or AY2023. Please indicate which year:**

Dean's signature:



Date: 3/18/2021

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**PROVOST SECTION**

After completion and signature, the Provost will email the final decision to the program and dean, with a copy to [uaa.oaa@alaska.edu](mailto:uaa.oaa@alaska.edu) for posting. If the program is delivered on a community campus, copy the appropriate community campus director(s) as well.

**Provost's commendations, additional or adjusted recommendations, if any, and other general comments (3000 characters or less):**

The program has made progress on the recommendations. Moving forward, I especially encourage a focus on the success of the program's students.

Recommendation 1) To decrease time to degree, the program focused on how it schedules courses, including greater coordination on course scheduling with UAS and UAF to provide more options for students.

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Recommendation 2) Streamlined internal course scheduling and greater coordination with UAF and UAS have addressed the issues related to faculty resources and program sustainability.

Decision: The program is asked to produce 1) a course schedule showing the course options across the three universities, 2) a course rotation, and 3) a clear decision agreed to by all parties regarding whether or not to pursue accreditation. If the program proposes to continue an MPA that requires total credits that exceed the Board minimum, a rationale for that decision must also be submitted. An Interim Progress Report demonstrating that these action items have been achieved is due to the dean by March 1, 2022. The dean will submit a review along with the program's Interim Progress Report to the provost by April 1, 2022.

**Final decision:** Agree with the dean's overall recommendation with the additional guidance and adjustments as per the above comments.

Provost's signature:  AE7EE55F615543D...

**Date:** July 12, 2021