

10/20/2025

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT FORM AY2025-2026**Program(s) in the review:** Public Administration MPA, Public Policy MPP**Specialized Accrediting Agency (if applicable):** N/A**Campuses where the program is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Year of last review:** The MPA was reviewed in AY2022-2023. The MPP was implemented in Fall 2020 and has not been through the program review process.**Final decision from last review:** Continued Review**PROGRAM SECTION (Due on March 1)****Program Review Committee:**

Kevin Berry, Department of Economics and Public Policy Chair, Professor of Economics, University of Alaska Anchorage

Kori Callison, MBA Program Director, University of Alaska Anchorage

Marie Lowe, Associate Professor of Public Policy, University of Alaska Anchorage

Greg Protasel, Associate Professor of Public Policy, University of Alaska Anchorage

1. Demonstrate that the program has responded to previous recommendations.**Recommendation 1:** *The alignment with the MPP and with ISER seems to be paying off. Think about other ways to expand outreach efforts.***How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)**

We measure success through multiple metrics: enrollment, diversity of student recruitment sources, and strategic partnerships. Since AY2023, we have expanded our recruitment efforts beyond traditional channels by attending community events, presenting at UAA career fairs, and engaging with Alaska Native organizations and rural communities. The integration with ISER has provided unique opportunities for student engagement through research assistantships, travel to rural Alaska for field research, and attendance at Arctic research conferences, all of which serve as recruitment and retention tools. Faculty in the MPA and MPP programs have worked to incorporate the program into the research activities of ISER while also using their own active research within the public policy field in Alaska to advance community engaged learning opportunities for students. Most directly this has included having students participate in research projects and policy analysis that ISER faculty are undertaking for the state. For example, MPP and MPA students have worked as graduate research assistants with ISER faculty on projects related to food security, energy security, and the sustainability of rural Alaska communities. These students have been funded through a mixture of Federal and state funding sources including competitive grants from the National Science Foundation. Specific funded projects employing MPA/MPP students include NSF Collaborative Research on Adaptable Microgrids in Arctic Communities, NSF Research on Riverbank Erosion in the Yukon River Basin, Denali Commission Technical Assistance for Alaska, and an NSF subaward investigating Green Energy Transitions in the Far North. One student's thesis on produce losses in the Alaska aviation supply chain contributed to a subsequent USDA grant for a

10/20/2025

Food/Ag Data Dashboard, an Alaska Governor's office supply chain award, and a UAA ConocoPhillips Arctic Science Award jointly with Engineering. This research experience also prepares students for higher education or other policy positions. Alumni have gone to pursue PhD and JD degrees, as well as working within the consulting and research profession where they lean upon the skills developed in the MPA and MPP programs at while working at ISER.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

Most faculty teaching within the MPA/MPP program are ISER faculty. The program has taken a series of steps to leverage this relationship between ISER in its outreach efforts.

1. Partnering with Alaska Native organizations including First Alaskans Institute, which led to the enrollment of graduates now working in Alaska Native policy roles.
2. Developed relationships with state agencies through guest lectures and practicum placements, resulting in program graduates securing positions with Alaska DNR, Division of Homeland Security, and the Alaska Legislature.
3. Leveraged ISER faculty research to create experiential learning opportunities, with students contributing to funded projects on food systems, wildlife management, and Arctic policy. Faculty have also leveraged the MPP and MPA programs as a source of graduate student research assistants for grants.
4. Developing courses based on current policy research by ISER faculty. UAA has the distinguished classification for Community Engagement by the Carnegie Foundation, and MPA/MPP faculty incorporate current policy issues into their courses. From Alaska and Arctic Policy Analyses to Economics & Public Policy, and students engage in real time and current policy questions within Alaska with faculty who are simultaneously working with policymakers, legislators, and the executive branch to advise on questions including labor issues, education funding, and Alaska's budget challenges. Guest speakers in Alaska Policy Studies have included an ADFG biologist and commissioner's representative on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, General Counsel for the Alaska Energy Authority, an Alaska Native author and Lower Yukon region resident, and a former Alaska Governor. Faculty also directly integrate their funded research into instruction: in PADM A604 (Research Methods), faculty use data from four active research projects to teach data management, survey design, and qualitative methods, with graduate research assistants sharing real-world research experience in class. In PADM A652 (GIS), faculty use wildfire and wildlife research data to design applied exercises addressing issues relevant to Alaska.
5. Engaged with federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, resulting in graduate placements. As a part of growing relationships with agencies the program has developed a positive reputation in the local policy community facilitating student placement.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

The alignment between the MPA/MPP programs and ISER has translated into funded graduate student positions, successful completion of policy-relevant deliverables, and increased professional readiness for public-sector employment.

One indicator of success is the employment of MPA and MPP students as ISER graduate research assistants. These positions are critical to ISER's research model and substitute for the doctoral students written into research proposals by peer research institutes be competitive for federal grant funding. Graduates employed through ISER have gone on to positions in state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and policy-focused roles, often leveraging professional networks developed through ISER-sponsored research.

The close integration of ISER research allows faculty to propose projects that incorporate graduate student training and applied learning, which is viewed favorably by state, federal, and foundation funders. This has contributed to sustained external funding activity and enabled ISER to respond rapidly to short-notice policy analysis requests from state and local stakeholders—an outcome made possible by the availability of MPA and MPP students.

The integration of ISER research into coursework aligns closely with UAA's Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. Courses regularly incorporate current policy challenges facing Alaska, with students engaging in real-time analysis informed by faculty research and practitioner networks.

Graduate tracking data demonstrates strong program outcomes associated with the integration of the programs with ISER. Of 40 tracked alumni from 2020-2025: 13 (32.5%) work in Alaska state government; 7 (17.5%) in federal government; 5 (12.5%) in Alaska nonprofit organizations; 4 (10%) in higher education administration at UAA; 3 (7.5%) in Alaska Native economic development or policy; 3 (7.5%) pursuing law degrees at prestigious institutions (Gonzaga, UC San Diego, University of Michigan); 2 (5%) in local government; 2 (5%) in healthcare; 1 (2.5%) pursuing a PhD at UAF.

Course enrollment data shows demand: PADM A601 (Introduction) averaged 12 students annually; PADM A606 (Policy Process) averaged 10 students; PADM A651 (Arctic Policy) averaged 10 students. Notable alumni outcomes include: an Alaska State Representative; multiple legislative aides; federal agency management positions; Alaska Municipal League senior staff; and successful entrepreneurs.

Recommendation 2: Consider ways to bring the total number of credits into alignment with the Board of Regents 30-credit minimum for a master's degree.

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Faculty members in the MPA and MPP programs are concerned that reducing either program to 30 credits would risk placing UAA out of alignment with national standards and the expectations of employers who rely on these programs to prepare Alaska's public-sector workforce.

Both the MPA and MPP programs are currently structured around a 36-credit curriculum, as reflected in the UAA catalog. This structure supports a balance of core coursework, electives, and a capstone or practicum that together ensure students acquire the analytic, managerial, and applied skills essential for competent public service. Because these degrees are designed to equip students for complex administrative and policy roles in state, tribal, municipal, nonprofit, and federal organizations, the current level of curricular depth is not merely traditional—it is necessary.

Nationally, most MPA and MPP programs require 36 or more credits. UAA peer institutions across the United States (see below) all maintain minimum 36-credit MPA programs. Most of the highly regarded and accredited MPA and MPP programs require more. Reducing UAA's programs to 30 credits would therefore depart from the prevailing norms in the field and could signal to prospective students, employers, and accrediting bodies that the academic expectations of our programs have been lowered. In a competitive higher-education environment, such a perception could weaken recruitment and diminish the professional standing of our graduates.

The depth provided by a 36-credit program is especially important in Alaska, where public service professionals must navigate not only typical administrative responsibilities but also challenges unique to the state. These include rural governance, tribal–federal relations, Arctic policy issues, environmental and resource management, and service delivery in remote communities. The program's structure supports learning in analytic methods, public finance, organizational management, leadership, ethics, and applied

policy research—competencies that require sufficient instructional time to develop. Reducing credits would force the removal or compression of content that directly contributes to graduates' readiness for roles that often involve high stakes and complex, cross-sector collaboration.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

MPA and MPP faculty members undertook an analysis of peer institutions and other universities supporting MPA and MPP programs. Among eight of UAA's institutional peers, eight have MPA programs and none have MPP programs. Credit hour requirements among peers range from 33 (University of North Georgia) to 39 (University of Alabama Birmingham), with most requiring 36 credits. Seven of eight peer MPA programs are delivered fully online, with UAA's peer University of Alaska Southeast also offering its 36-credit MPA online. Only the University of Alabama Birmingham delivers its program face-to-face.

A broader sample of nationally recognized MPA programs at major research universities shows significantly higher credit hour requirements, typically ranging from 40 to 48 credits. Programs at institutions such as NYU Wagner (45), Syracuse Maxwell (40), Indiana University O'Neill (48), USC Sol Price (40), George Washington Trachtenberg (40), UNC Chapel Hill School of Government (45), University of Georgia SPIA (41), Rutgers Newark (42), and University of Kansas (40) reflect the higher expectations of elite, well-resourced programs with larger faculty and student bodies.

Similarly, a sample of MPP programs nationally shows credit hour requirements ranging from 36 to 48 credits. Programs at Georgetown McCourt (48), USC Price (48), Indiana O'Neill (48), and Rutgers Bloustein (48) sit at the upper end, while programs at Temple University (36), University of Arizona (36), George Mason Schar (36–39), and UMBC (37) require fewer credits. Mid-range programs include American University SPA (39), George Washington Trachtenberg (40), University of Utah (40), Arizona State (42), and University of Kentucky Martin School (37).

UAA's MPA program at 36 credits aligns with the majority of its peer institutions, though it sits at the lower end compared to nationally prominent programs. The MPP program's credit requirements should similarly be evaluated in the context of these national benchmarks. This analysis informs ongoing discussions about program structure, competitiveness, and resource allocation as the programs consider curricular adjustments.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

As a compromise, in the 2024-2025 academic year, faculty members agreed to eliminate the MPA program's emphasis areas through the curriculum process, with special focus on the health and justice emphasis areas that drew students away from enrolling in core classes and lowering our enrollments. Further, although we researched adding an emphasis area in natural resource policy in the MPP program, we abandoned this idea to address the enrollment issue in our core courses. We also eliminated the three credit internship requirement for students without any administration oriented work experience. Almost all of the MPA students in recent years have work experience that has allowed them to waive this requirement. Students in both the MPA and MPP programs are allowed to take up to six credits in electives in any approved subject area. This allows them some flexibility in having the ability to choose specialized courses in their respective areas of interest which can be varied, i.e. not only health, justice, natural resource management and policy, but also education, climate change and sustainability, maritime affairs, and Arctic security.

In conclusion, the 36-credit requirement for the MPA and MPP programs remains both academically and professionally justified. Reducing the programs to 30 credits would place UAA at odds with national

10/20/2025

standards, diminish the perceived value of these degrees, and jeopardize the depth of preparation needed for Alaska's public-sector workforce.

Recommendation 3: *Build a close relationship with state employees and managers to provide them education that can lead to future program enrollment.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Graduate tracking data demonstrates strong program outcomes associated with the close relationship developed with state employees and managers. Of 40 tracked alumni from 2020-2025, over half work in Alaska state government or in federal government (13 (32.5%) work in Alaska state government; 2 (5%) in local government; 7 (17.5%) in federal government, 4 (10%) in higher education administration). Notable alumni outcomes include: an Alaska State Representative; multiple legislative aides; federal agency management positions and Alaska Municipal League senior staff. The main strength of our program is across Alaska's public service sector, particularly into service with government across levels.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

1. Integrated state government professionals as guest speakers in core courses, particularly Alaska Policy Studies, Policy Process, and Public Management courses. Recent speakers included agency directors, legislative staff, commissioners, and senior managers discussing real-world policy challenges. These guest speakers also can learn about our programs and the quality of education offered by our program and take materials and our recruitment message back to their offices.
2. Developed internship and practicum opportunities with state and federal agencies, allowing students to contribute to agency projects while building professional networks.
3. Recruited state employees as part-time students, with several current students working in state government while pursuing their degrees.
4. Explored options for professional development programming for state employees, including potential non-degree certificate programs.
5. Maintained relationships with state government alumni, who frequently return as guest speakers and mentors to current students. Additionally, we have worked to develop our alumni network through social networks such as LinkedIn to build a relationship with alumni that leads to recommendations and additional recruitment – both for new students, and to place recent graduates in jobs.
6. Engaged with Alaska Municipal League, state professional associations, and policy networks to maintain visibility and relevance. ISER, economics, and public policy faculty all directly engage in the public policy process including regularly presenting to policy organizations.
7. Engaged with the Alaska Federal Executives Association on two public policy seminars, internship and post-degree employment opportunities, and new elective coursework to facilitate capital improvement planning among Alaska municipalities and tribes, i.e. PADM A652 GIS for Policy and Planning and PADM A671 Grant Writing and Grants Management.
8. Designed courses to address Alaska-specific governance challenges, i.e. PADM A650 Alaska Policy Studies and PADM A651 Issues in Arctic Policy ensuring content directly supports state employee professional development needs. These relationships provide access to managers and state employees to both learn of opportunities for student placement and build relationships where UAA can become the first choice for higher education and training for government employees.

10/20/2025

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Our evidence of success primary comes from the placements of our students in state government jobs, and growing enrollments from the public sector. Our distinguished alumni, including elected officials and policymakers demonstrate that the reputation of the MPA and MPP program, as well as ISER (through Recommendation 1) are leading to increased success within the state in building the program.

Current enrollment includes multiple state employees pursuing degrees part-time while maintaining their positions. Alumni placement data shows sustained state government employment: graduates work as Alaska State Representatives, legislative aides (working with Senator Murkowski's office and the Alaska Legislature), program managers in the Department of Commerce, park rangers with DNR, emergency managers with Homeland Security, and planning staff with the Alaska Municipal League. The professional network effect is evident: several recent students report learning about the program from colleagues who are alumni. Guest speaker participation has increased, with agency leaders expressing interest in ongoing collaboration. The geographic reach extends beyond Anchorage: graduates work in state roles across Alaska, including rural and regional positions. Our online course delivery makes the program accessible to state employees throughout Alaska, removing geographic barriers. Course content directly addresses state governance challenges: public financial management using Alaska budget examples, policy analysis using Alaska case studies, organizational theory applied to state agency structures. This relevance makes the program attractive to state employees seeking professional advancement.

Recommendation 4: *The coordination with UAS is a great start and UAA may have much to offer their program if/when they downsize their resources in a declining program. UAA should explore more formally offering to teach specific courses that are mutual to both programs to create more efficiency both here and at UAS.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

We have successfully operationalized cross-enrollment between UAA and UAS, with students from both institutions able to take courses at the other campus. Our online course delivery infrastructure enables students to enroll in our courses regardless of physical location. Courses such as Arctic Policy and Alaska Policy Studies that may not be offered at UAS in a given semester are always available via online delivery from UAA. Conversely, UAA students occasionally enroll in UAS courses when they are unable to enroll in UAA courses due to schedule conflicts or lack of availability. Both programs benefit from the expanded course catalog available to students, and the online delivery mode has also made it possible for students from UAF to join courses offered by the MPA and MPP program as all courses are available to any student within the system.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

1. Established communication between UAA and UAS advising regarding course schedules and student needs.
2. Ensured consistent curriculum across campuses and course delivery modalities that make it possible for students can enroll in sections across campuses. This includes ensuring all UAA MPPA courses offer online participation options, eliminating geographic barriers for UAS students. Additionally, it requires an understanding of differences in rigor across campuses to ensure our students are adequately prepared for their capstone research.
3. Faculty also petitioned former Dean [REDACTED] to remove the CBPP tuition surcharge from MPA and MPP classes which was preventing students from other campuses enrolling in our classes. Dean [REDACTED]

10/20/2025

facilitated this change due to our argument that MPPA students will not command the same salaries post-graduation as their MBA counterparts, nor do the MPPA faculty members earn comparable salaries to their colleagues in CBPP.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

UAS students have participated in UAA offerings, particularly in specialized courses. The online delivery model has proven effective, with distance students reporting positive experiences and comparable learning outcomes to in-person participants. Student feedback indicates appreciation for the expanded options and flexibility. The collaboration has positioned UA as offering a statewide MPA option rather than competing programs, strengthening the overall value proposition for prospective students. The current model of coordination provides immediate benefits while allowing time for more comprehensive planning.

MPA Recommendation 5: *Think about how the program puts students first.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

We demonstrate student-centered approach through: flexible course delivery, responsive advising, practical skill development, diverse pedagogy, and career support. Course pass rates for graduate-level PADM courses exceed institutional averages at 93-94%, indicating effective teaching and appropriate academic support. The program achieves these success metrics while maintaining and emphasizing academic rigor. Students benefit from faculty accessibility, real-world relevance of coursework, and career preparation. The program is structured to serve working professionals and mid-career students, many of whom balance full-time employment, family responsibilities, and community commitments alongside graduate study. Course scheduling, delivery modes, and curricular flexibility reflect an intentional effort to reduce unnecessary barriers to degree completion. The program has eliminated barriers through online options, evening course times, asynchronous components, and flexible capstone formats. Faculty maintain regular office hours, respond promptly to student communications, and adapt teaching based on student feedback. The integration of research experiences, practicum opportunities, and professional networking supports holistic student development beyond traditional classroom learning.

Faculty advising is individualized and responsive, with regular attention to students' academic progress, professional goals, and time-to-degree. Students are supported in selecting electives, capstone topics, and applied projects that align with their career trajectories and workplace contexts. The program's emphasis on applied learning ensures that coursework is relevant, immediately useful, and directly connected to students' professional environments.

Evidence that the recommendation has been achieved is reflected in steady course completion, continued enrollment of working professionals, positive student feedback, and graduates who report that the program added clear professional value without requiring them to step away from employment or community service. Together, these indicators demonstrate that the MPA program places student needs, success, and professional development at the center of program decision-making.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

Faculty have taken multiple deliberate actions to ensure the MPA program puts students first.

1. Continuously implemented comprehensive online delivery for all courses, enabling students throughout Alaska to participate without relocating.

2. Courses are offered on predictable schedules and in delivery formats that support part-time enrollment, enabling students to plan their coursework well in advance. Scheduled courses in evening time slots to accommodate working professionals, with asynchronous options for those with schedule conflicts.
3. Adopted OER and zero-textbook-cost materials where feasible, reducing financial burden on students. In addition to support affordability, we have negotiated a reduction in the CBPP tuition surcharge (see above)
4. The curriculum emphasizes applied assignments, case studies, and projects that allow students to integrate coursework with their professional roles. Faculty regularly adapt assignments so students can analyze real-world challenges from their workplaces or communities, increasing both engagement and relevance. Capstone and applied research options are designed to be flexible, allowing students to tailor their culminating experience to their career interests while meeting program learning outcomes. Faculty have created research assistantship opportunities through ISER partnerships, providing financial support and professional experience.
5. Established mentoring relationships between faculty and students, with particular attention to first-generation graduate students and those from underrepresented backgrounds. Advising is proactive and ongoing, with faculty engaging students early to discuss degree planning, elective choices, and capstone or practicum pathways.
6. Faculty also work closely with students who face unexpected challenges, such as work transitions or family obligations, to identify appropriate academic accommodations, alternative timelines, or course sequencing options. Program discussions around curriculum revisions—such as streamlining emphasis areas and maintaining elective flexibility—have been guided explicitly by concerns about student progress, course availability, and overall learning experience.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Course pass rates consistently at 93-94% for graduate courses. Student evaluations show high satisfaction with faculty responsiveness and course relevance. Completion rates remain strong despite students balancing graduate work with full-time employment. Time-to-graduation averages 2-3 years, appropriate for part-time adult learners. Employment outcomes validate career preparation: 95% of tracked graduates are employed in their field of study within one year of graduation. Alumni report career advancement following degree completion. Student work products demonstrate mastery of competencies: capstone projects address real Alaska policy challenges with rigor and practical applicability. Research conducted by students contributes to faculty publications and grant proposals. Students present at conferences including regional and national venues, as well as international Arctic conferences. The program has successfully served diverse student populations: Alaska Native students, rural Alaskans, career-changers, international students, military veterans, and first-generation graduate students. Student feedback mechanisms include mid-semester check-ins, end-of-course and evaluations all of which inform continuous improvement efforts.

Building on our current student-centered practices, we recommend the following enhancements to further reduce barriers and improve student success:

- 1) STREAMLINE ADMISSIONS: Align admissions requirements between UAA and UAS programs to create a consistent application process. Reduce application materials to focus only on those that best predict student success, eliminating unnecessary barriers to entry.

10/20/2025

2) ELIMINATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: Remove the comprehensive examination requirement. The capstone project more effectively assesses integration of learning and professional competency. This change would reduce stress, cost, and time-to-degree while maintaining academic rigor through the capstone assessment.

3) UNIFIED CAPSTONE STRUCTURE: Consolidate the capstone experience into a single shared course (or course sequence) that serves both MPA and MPP students. A unified structure would allow students from both programs to learn from each other's perspectives and provide flexibility in capstone format (applied research, policy analysis, or program evaluation) tailored to student career goals. A shared capstone would maintain distinct learning outcomes while recognizing the substantial overlap in applied policy analysis skills.

Recommendation 6: *Identify at least one opportunity for students to develop each of UAA's core competencies within the program's curricular and/or co-curricular offering.*

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

The MPA program has successfully embedded intentional opportunities for students to develop each of UAA's four core competencies—Effective Communication; Creative and Critical Thinking; Intercultural Fluency; and Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility—within both curricular and co-curricular experiences. These competencies are not treated as add-ons, but are integrated into required coursework, applied assignments, and culminating experiences.

Because the program operates with relatively small cohorts, faculty are able to ensure that every student engages directly with activities designed to develop these competencies. Students repeatedly demonstrate these skills through written policy analyses, oral briefings, group projects, applied research, and community-engaged work. Faculty observe student growth across competencies over the course of the program, particularly as students move from foundational coursework to applied and capstone experiences.

Achievement of this recommendation is evident in the consistency with which students can articulate, apply, and reflect on these competencies in coursework and professional settings. The small size of the program allows faculty to monitor individual student progress closely and to verify that each student has meaningful exposure to all four core competency areas prior to graduation.

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

Faculty have explicitly aligned core competencies with program learning outcomes and course-level assignments. Effective Communication is developed through policy memos, briefing papers, oral presentations, and capstone defenses. Creative and Critical Thinking is emphasized through policy analysis, data interpretation, case studies, and evaluation of tradeoffs inherent in public decision-making.

Intercultural Fluency is integrated through coursework focused on Alaska-specific governance contexts, including rural and Indigenous communities, tribal–state–federal relations, and culturally responsive public service delivery. Students engage with diverse perspectives through applied projects, guest speakers, and policy case studies rooted in Alaska's demographic, geographic, and cultural

Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility is reinforced through ethics instruction, leadership and management coursework, applied research projects, and community-engaged learning experiences. Students are expected to reflect on professional ethics, public service values, and the real-world impacts of policy and administrative decisions.

Co-curricular opportunities—including participation in policy forums, conferences, applied research projects, and guest lectures—further reinforce these competencies. Faculty leverage the program’s small size to provide individualized feedback and mentorship, ensuring that competency development is intentional rather than incidental.

Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Evidence that these actions are effective is found in student work products, capstone projects, and professional outcomes. Students consistently produce high-quality written and oral analyses that demonstrate strong communication skills and critical thinking. Applied projects show that students can engage thoughtfully with culturally diverse communities and policy contexts, particularly those unique to Alaska.

Faculty observations indicate that students demonstrate increased confidence and professionalism over the course of the program, particularly in their ability to communicate complex ideas to non-academic audiences and to navigate ethical and intercultural considerations in public service settings. Alumni feedback suggests that graduates are well prepared to assume responsibilities that require judgment, accountability, and community engagement.

2. Demonstrate the centrality of the program to the mission, needs, and purposes of the university and the college/community campus. Include how the program is integrating (or planning to integrate) intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop the four core competencies (Effective Communication; Creative and Critical Thinking; Intercultural Fluency; and Personal, Professional, & Community Responsibility). (3000 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP are central to the mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage as Alaska’s public metropolitan university, with a responsibility to serve the public sector educational, workforce, and community needs of the state. Both programs directly support UAA’s emphasis on community engagement, applied scholarship, and workforce preparation by educating professionals who contribute to effective governance, public administration, and policy development across Alaska’s state, municipal, tribal, nonprofit, and federal institutions.

Within the College of Business & Public Policy, the MPA and MPP programs align closely with the college’s mission to provide professionally relevant education grounded in analytical rigor and real-world application. The programs emphasize evidence-based decision-making, ethical leadership, and applied policy analysis, preparing graduates to address complex public-sector challenges. The close integration with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) further strengthens this alignment by linking graduate education with applied research and public service that directly informs policymakers and communities throughout Alaska.

The programs are designed to serve working professionals and place-bound students, including those located outside Anchorage, through flexible course delivery and applied learning opportunities. This approach supports UAA’s commitment to access and responsiveness while allowing students to remain engaged in their professional and community roles as they progress toward degree completion.

The MPA and MPP intentionally integrate UAA’s four core competencies across required coursework, electives, and culminating experiences. Effective Communication is developed through written policy analyses, management memos, oral presentations, and capstone projects that require students to communicate clearly with professional and public audiences. Creative and Critical Thinking is emphasized through systematic policy analysis, evaluation of alternatives, and data-informed problem solving. Intercultural Fluency is addressed through coursework and applied projects that engage Alaska’s diverse cultural, geographic, and governance contexts, including rural, Indigenous, and cross-jurisdictional policy

environments. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility is reinforced through instruction in ethics, leadership, and public service values, as well as through community-engaged research and applied projects.

3. Demonstrate program quality and improvement through assessment and other indicators.

i. MPA Public Administration

- *Demonstrate 1) Leadership and decision making; 2) Communications; 3) Awareness of the values and tradeoffs in public service, including sustainability, citizen engagement, democratic values and transparency; 4) Role of financial, human, information, technology and other resources; 5) Knowledge of the policy process, including assessment; 6) Problem-solving, including the use of evidence; 7) Information processing and technology for effective administration.*

Describe your key findings for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

For each assessment cycle, we specifically evaluate the students on these competencies

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

The MPA program has demonstrated consistent achievement of its seven core learning outcomes through capstone projects, comprehensive examinations, course-embedded assessments, and professional placement data. Key findings indicate that students are successfully developing competencies in leadership, communication, policy analysis, and resource management that align with professional standards in public administration.

Assessment data from 2020-2025 shows strong student performance across all seven outcome areas. Graduate tracking data from this period indicates that 40 alumni from both the MPA and MPP programs have been successfully placed in positions that utilize their program learning outcomes. Of these graduates, 32 completed the MPA program and 8 completed the MPP program.

Employment outcomes demonstrate the program's success in preparing students for professional practice. Forty percent of tracked graduates are employed in direct public sector positions (state, federal, or local government), where they apply leadership, financial management, and policy analysis skills. An additional 12.5% work in nonprofit and tribal organizations, requiring similar competencies in public service contexts. Twenty-five percent continued to higher education roles or advanced degree programs, indicating successful preparation for further academic and professional development. The remaining 22.5% are employed in related sectors including healthcare administration, consulting, and entrepreneurship, demonstrating the transferability of MPA competencies.

Course pass rates for graduate-level courses in the program have remained consistently high, averaging 92.6% over the five-year period (ranging from 91% to 94% annually). This suggests that students are successfully mastering course content while maintaining academic rigor. The program has maintained

consistent enrollment with an average of 6.5 students per course section across 78 course offerings from 2020-2025, generating 1,497 student credit hours during this period.

Capstone projects serve as a culminating assessment where students integrate multiple learning outcomes. Review of recent capstone work shows students successfully applying research methods, policy analysis frameworks, financial analysis, and stakeholder engagement strategies to address real-world public administration challenges in Alaska. Projects have addressed topics including municipal budget analysis, program evaluation for state agencies, organizational restructuring, and policy recommendations for tribal governments.

The comprehensive examination, required of all MPA students, assesses breadth and depth of knowledge across the seven outcome areas. Recent exam results indicate that students demonstrate competency in synthesizing theoretical knowledge with practical application, analyzing complex organizational and policy problems, and articulating professional perspectives grounded in public service values.

Describe actions taken to improve student learning for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

The MPA Assessment Plan was revised to better align with the MPP program and the accrediting body's (NASPAA's) core competencies. The new assessment plan provides updated and clearer measures of student learning outcomes for the program.

MPA students are now encouraged to take the research methods course immediately prior to taking the capstone course in order to give them extra time in choosing and researching a capstone topic as well as in finding a community client to work with. This change is helping the MPA students graduate in a more timely fashion.

Faculty have taken deliberate actions to strengthen student learning across all seven MPA outcomes through curriculum refinement, pedagogical improvements, and enhanced integration with applied research at the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER).

Leadership and decision-making competencies were strengthened by incorporating case-based. Students engage with real administrative scenarios requiring analysis of organizational dynamics, stakeholder interests, and ethical considerations. Guest speakers from Alaska's public sector share leadership challenges and decision-making frameworks.

Communication skills are developed intentionally through policy analysis writing assignments. Students complete policy memos and briefing papers across multiple courses, receiving feedback on clarity, audience awareness, and professional formatting. The capstone requires both written analysis and oral presentation, ensuring students can communicate complex ideas to diverse audiences. Faculty emphasize visual communication through data visualizations and presentation materials.

Public service values awareness has been deepened through explicit discussion of Alaska and Arctic policy issues, democratic values, transparency, and citizen engagement. Alaska Policy Studies and Issues in Arctic Policy provide Alaska-specific contexts for examining how public service values intersect with governance challenges including rural service delivery, tribal-state-federal relations, and resource management.

Resource management understanding was strengthened through updated courses focused on local policy issues. Faculty expertise in geographic information systems enhanced understanding of spatial data and technology resources. In PADM A652 (GIS for Policy and Planning), faculty designed applied exercises using data and methods from active wildfire and wildlife research, connecting technology instruction directly to Alaska policy issues.

Policy process knowledge is reinforced through integration with ISER research projects. Faculty regularly incorporate their applied research work in MPA courses where students engage in policy analysis and discussion. The Policymaking Process course was revised to include Alaska-focused case studies and recent policy developments.

Problem-solving and evidence use are emphasized throughout research methods and applied systematically in electives. Faculty ensure students gain proficiency in both quantitative and qualitative methods and can apply appropriate analytical techniques. The capstone requirement ensures substantive engagement with empirical evidence and methodological competence.

Information technology skills were enhanced through GIS coursework, updated instruction in data visualization, and statistical software training. Faculty recognize graduates must be comfortable with technology tools for data analysis, performance measurement, and public communication.

Describe evidence that these actions are working. (3500 characters or less)

Multiple forms of evidence indicate that actions to improve student learning are achieving intended outcomes, including assessment results, employment data, student work products, and feedback from alumni and employers. Recent capstone projects show stronger integration of theory and practice, more sophisticated use of evidence, and clearer communication of findings. Faculty observe that students better frame policy problems, identify alternatives, and articulate implementation considerations. Iterative writing feedback has resulted in final capstone documents meeting professional standards.

Graduate employment outcomes provide strong evidence of professional preparation. Of 40 tracked graduates from 2020–2025, 100% are employed or pursuing further education in fields utilizing their training. Sixteen graduates (40%) work in state, federal, or local government with responsibilities directly aligned with program learning outcomes, including budget analysis, program management, policy development, and administrative leadership. An additional five graduates (12.5%) serve nonprofit and tribal organizations. Among MPA graduates specifically, state government is the most common placement (20%), followed by healthcare (13.3%) and higher education administration (13.3%). Federal government and Alaska nonprofit organizations each account for 10% of placements. Positions held include budget analyst, legislative aide, program coordinator, grants administrator, policy analyst, tribal administrator, and municipal planner. Several graduates advanced to supervisory or leadership roles within a few years, indicating readiness for increased responsibility.

Ten graduates (25%) continued to advanced education or academic roles, including law school, doctoral programs, and higher education administration, demonstrating successful preparation not only for immediate practice but also for further intellectual development. Competitiveness for law schools and PhD programs reflects positively on curriculum rigor and quality. Employment diversity across government levels, entrepreneurship, political strategy, and healthcare suggests graduates developed adaptable, transferable skills applicable well beyond traditional public administration settings.

Alumni feedback, gathered through professional networks and LinkedIn outreach, consistently indicates graduates felt well prepared and that specific coursework—particularly research methods, financial management, and policy analysis—proved immediately applicable.

ii. MPP Public Policy

- *1) Lead and manage in public policymaking and governance; 2) Apply, participate in and contribute to the public policy process; 3) Create and apply methods and tools to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions across a broad set of policy issues; 4) Articulate a public service*

perspective to engaging in public policy work; 5) Analyze the Alaska and Arctic public policy and economic contexts and how to work successfully within them; 6) Communicate and interact productively with diverse communities and institutions.

Describe your key findings for these outcomes. Programs may enter “See above” if there is a significant overlap of outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

The MPP program has successfully developed a curriculum supporting achievement of its six core learning outcomes. Assessment data from the first five years demonstrates that students are developing competencies in policy leadership, policy process engagement, analytical methods, public service perspectives, Alaska and Arctic policy contexts, and communication with diverse stakeholders.

Additionally, each assessment cycle, we assess all of the MPP Program’s SLOs (based on NASPAA competencies) for the MPP students taking the capstone courses and conducting capstone research:

- 1) Lead and manage in public policymaking and governance: 4 students met faculty expectations.
- 2) Apply, participate in and contribute to the public policy process: 4 students exceeded faculty expectations.
- 3) Create and apply methods and tools to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions across a broad set of policy issues: 4 students exceeded faculty expectations.
- 4) Articulate a public service perspective to engaging in public policy work: 4 students met faculty expectations.
- 5) Analyze the Alaska and Arctic public policy and economic contexts and how to work successfully within them: 4 students exceeded faculty expectations.
- 6) Communicate and interact productively with diverse communities and institutions: 4 students exceeded faculty expectations.

Employment outcomes for the eight MPP graduates tracked from 2020-2025 demonstrate successful preparation for policy-oriented careers. Alumni are employed as state policy analysts, federal government researchers, Alaska Native policy advisors, and military policy specialists. These placements reflect the program's emphasis on applied policy analysis and Alaska/Arctic contexts. Several graduates pursued positions specifically focused on environmental policy, Indigenous governance, and Arctic security.

The Alaska and Arctic focus has emerged as a distinctive strength. Courses in Alaska Policy Studies and Issues in Arctic Policy have attracted not only MPP students but also MPA students and students from other programs. These courses provide deep engagement in unique governance, economic, environmental, and cultural contexts shaping policy in Alaska and the circumpolar North. Students develop understanding of how federalism, tribal sovereignty, resource economics, climate change, and remoteness create distinctive policy challenges.

Student work products demonstrate growing sophistication in policy analysis methods. MPP capstone projects apply both quantitative and qualitative methods, include stakeholder analysis, evaluate policy alternatives, and develop feasible recommendations grounded in evidence. Recent projects addressed renewable energy policy, food security in rural Alaska, education funding, and Arctic infrastructure development.

Integration with ISER research has been particularly valuable, with students participating in policy-relevant research projects as graduate assistants and research professionals. This experiential learning

reinforces analytical competencies and provides direct exposure to how policy research informs decision-making by legislators, administrators, and community leaders.

MPP students have demonstrated competence in communicating with diverse audiences through presentations to stakeholders, policy memos, and collaborative projects. Small cohort sizes have allowed intensive faculty mentorship and opportunities to present work in professional settings.

Describe actions taken to improve student learning for these outcomes. Programs may enter “See above” if there is a significant overlap of outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

Program improvements have included integrating the three course progression (Research Methods—Capstone A—Capstone B) to help students efficiently through the capstone process, produce meaningful policy analyses important for Alaska, and to graduate on time.

The faculty decided to make changes to another core course, PADM A632 Public Policy Analysis, to include it as a key course in the existing course progression helping the students choose a policy research problem in our research methods class, collect and analyze data in Capstone A, and perform a policy analysis in Capstone B to be included in the report and issue brief. In the policy analysis course, students learn a standard policy analysis process (Bardach’s 8-Fold Path) which they can then apply to their capstone topics.

To strengthen leadership and management competencies in policy contexts, faculty developed coursework emphasizing leadership dimensions of policy work, including stakeholder engagement, coalition building, and navigating political constraints. The program recognizes that effective policy professionals must lead initiatives, manage projects, and work across organizational boundaries, not only conduct technical analysis.

Engagement with the policy process has been enhanced through closer integration with ISER research activities and curriculum connecting students directly with Alaska's policymaking institutions. Faculty arrange guest speakers from the Alaska Legislature, state agencies, tribal governments, and advocacy organizations to share insights about policy development and implementation. Students participate in legislative activities, attend policy forums, and engage with current debates, providing experiential learning that reinforces classroom instruction.

Development of analytical methods and critical thinking has been strengthened through addition of faculty expertise in natural resource policy and GIS, expanding the methodological toolkit available to MPP students. Faculty designed the GIS course (PADM A652) using data and methods from active wildfire and wildlife research, ensuring applied exercises address real Alaska policy issues. Faculty created a potential emphasis area in natural resource management and policy to provide structured pathways for students interested in environmental and resource policy analysis, aligning with Alaska's policy priorities.

To cultivate a public service perspective, faculty ensured that coursework addresses questions of [REDACTED] democratic participation, and the public interest. Assignments require students to consider distributive impacts of policies, evaluate whose interests are represented in decision-making, and reflect on their roles and responsibilities as policy professionals.

The Alaska and Arctic focus has been deepened through addition of new courses—Alaska Policy Studies and Issues in Arctic Policy—which provide systematic engagement with governance, economic, security, and environmental policy challenges facing the state and region. Faculty also incorporated more Alaska-specific content into core courses, using state budget documents, Alaska case law, and local policy debates as instructional materials.

10/20/2025

Communication and cross-cultural competencies are developed through assignments requiring students to tailor analysis and recommendations to diverse audiences, including policymakers, technical experts, and community members.

Describe evidence that these actions are working. Programs may enter “See above” if there is a significant overlap of outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

Evidence that actions to improve MPP student learning are succeeding includes employment outcomes, student work products, course enrollment patterns, and integration with ISER research. To date, MPP students have produced professional policy reports and briefs on timely topics important to Alaska, including salmon fisheries allocations in Upper Cook Inlet, access to the Alaska Renewable Energy Fund program, potential impacts to subsistence of the Graphite One mine on the Seward Peninsula, implications of increased marine traffic through the Bering Strait, solutions for produce spoilage in Alaska rural grocery supply chains, comparison of carbon tax versus renewable energy portfolio policies for improving air quality in Fairbanks, impacts of the free rider problem in public employee unions after the Supreme Court’s Janus decision, and the effect of different funding models on student outcomes in the Anchorage School District.

The MPP program was approved by the UA Board of Regents in March 2020, just as the pandemic was declared, with the first graduates completing in 2022. All eight MPP graduates tracked from 2022–2025 are employed in policy-relevant positions or pursuing further education. Employment spans several sectors: three graduates work in Alaska consulting and policy roles, three are in government positions at the state or federal level, one entered law school, and one serves in the military. These placements demonstrate successful preparation for professional policy careers across diverse fields.

Notably, MPP graduates secured specialized policy positions rather than general administrative roles, indicating that the program’s policy-specific competencies are valued by employers. Several graduates work in areas directly aligned with the program’s Alaska and Arctic emphasis, including state policy analysis, federal government research, and Alaska Native policy advisory roles. This curricular focus appears to provide a competitive advantage for students seeking Alaska-based careers.

MPP capstone projects demonstrate strong integration of analytical methods, contextual understanding, and policy process knowledge. Recent projects addressed complex policy challenges requiring students to synthesize quantitative data, qualitative stakeholder input, legal frameworks, and political feasibility considerations. Project quality reflects successful achievement of learning outcomes related to analytical competence, Alaska and Arctic expertise, and communication skills.

The program’s integration with ISER has provided valuable experiential learning. Several MPP students have been employed as ISER graduate research assistants, contributing to funded research projects on rural economic development, energy policy, food security, and community resilience. These experiences reinforced analytical skills while building professional networks and demonstrating direct application of policy research to decision-making.

- b. Demonstrate program quality and improvement through other means, for example, maintaining specialized accreditation, using guidance from advisory boards/councils, responding to community partners and local needs, maintaining currency of the curriculum, implementing innovative program design, intentionally integrating high-impact teaching and learning practices into the program, and**

10/20/2025

meeting indications of quality in distance education, such as the C-RAC Standards. (3500 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs demonstrate quality through pursuit of specialized accreditation, responsiveness to community partners, curriculum currency, and integration of high-impact practices.

The programs are currently pursuing accreditation through the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The department chair attended the NASPAA annual conference in Fall 2022 and participated in an accreditation workshop. Faculty have systematically aligned the MPP assessment plan with NASPAA standards and revised the MPA assessment plan. This work includes cross-walking course and program learning outcomes, documenting assessment methods, and establishing processes for regular evaluation and improvement. One challenge is the requirement for five full-time faculty members; the department currently has four faculty at or above 0.6 FTE. Several of these faculty are retiring or moving to new positions that may reduce overall participation in the program.

The programs demonstrate strong responsiveness to community partners and Alaska workforce needs. Faculty maintain active engagement with state agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations through research partnerships and direct service. This engagement informs curriculum development and ensures content reflects current policy challenges and competencies valued by employers. Courses in Alaska Policy Studies and Arctic Policy were developed in response to expressed needs from policymakers and practitioners.

Faculty regularly present research findings to organizations including the Alaska Municipal League, Alaska Forum on the Environment, and Alaska Chamber of Commerce, providing opportunities to discuss program offerings, recruit students, and gather curricular input. Faculty also table at professional conferences and community events to increase program visibility.

Curriculum currency is maintained through regular review of course content, incorporation of recent policy developments and case studies, and addition of new courses addressing emerging issues. Economics and public policy faculty directly engage in Alaska's policy process through research, legislative testimony, and advisory roles, bringing current real-world policy experience into the classroom. Faculty incorporate data from their active funded research directly into course instruction: in PADM A604 (Research Methods), data from four research projects are used to teach data management, survey design, and qualitative methods, and in PADM A652 (GIS), wildfire and wildlife research data inform applied exercises.

The programs integrate high-impact practices including applied research, capstone experiences, internships and practicums, service learning, and collaborative assignments. Integration with ISER research provides opportunities for students to contribute to real policy analysis that informs decision-makers. Capstone projects address authentic challenges, often in partnership with external organizations.

The programs' commitment to serving working professionals is reflected in flexible course delivery, including high-flex formats allowing both in-person and remote participation. Evening schedules and predictable course rotations enable degree planning while students balance employment and family responsibilities.

4. Demonstrate student success and the closing of achievement gaps.

- a. Analyze and respond to the disaggregated data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to close any achievement gaps. The Student Success program review metrics are Junior Graduation Rate,**

Associate Graduation Rate, Semesters to Degree – Graduate Programs, and Course Pass Rates by Course Level. (3500 characters or less)

The institutional data sheet provides several metrics relevant to student success. The most relevant metrics for these programs are semesters to degree for graduate programs and course pass rates at the graduate level.

Graduate-level course pass rates have remained consistently strong throughout the review period, ranging from 91 percent to 94 percent across AY2021 through AY2025. The institutional comparison data show graduate course pass rates of 94 percent in 2021, 91 percent in 2022, 93 percent in 2023, 92 percent in 2024, and 93 percent in 2025. These rates indicate that students in the MPA and MPP programs are performing well academically and that course-level expectations are appropriately calibrated for the enrolled student population. The slight dip to 91 percent in 2022 coincided with the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and a leadership transition in the department, but rates recovered in subsequent years and have remained stable.

Because the MPA and MPP programs serve primarily working adults enrolled part time, semesters to degree tends to be longer than for full-time residential programs. This pattern is common among professional graduate programs in public administration and policy nationwide and reflects the structural realities of students who balance graduate study with full-time employment, family responsibilities, and community commitments. Faculty recognize that time to degree is influenced more by external factors than by academic difficulty and advising practices have been strengthened to help students plan efficient pathways through the curriculum.

With respect to achievement gaps, the programs' small cohort sizes make disaggregated analysis by demographic group difficult without risking identification of individual students. However, the programs serve a diverse student body that includes Alaska Native students, military-connected students, international students, and students from rural communities. Faculty are attentive to ensuring that course design, delivery formats, and advising practices are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students. The emphasis on Alaska-specific content, including coursework addressing tribal governance, rural service delivery, and Indigenous policy contexts, supports the success of students from diverse backgrounds by connecting academic work to relevant community and cultural contexts.

Faculty have taken steps to reduce unintended barriers to completion, including strengthening early advising, refining the course sequence leading into the capstone, improving transparency around course rotations, and providing greater flexibility in capstone design. The program is also exploring whether modifications to the comprehensive examination process could reduce delays in degree completion without compromising academic rigor.

- b. Numerous US universities, and a number of programs across UAA, have holistically evaluated their programs and courses to look for unintended barriers to student success. For example, the Purdue IMPACT (Instruction Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation) effort between 2011 and 2018 resulted in 325 courses being redesigned to incorporate research-based strategies known to increase student outcomes, while maintaining academic quality and rigor. Other efforts have involved course sequencing and scheduling, resulting in improved success even for [graduate students](#). Please consider your program's graduation rate, course pass rates, and similar data sources to reflect on any barriers to students moving through the curriculum, and describe what steps you have taken (or are planning to**

take) for possible redesign of gateway courses, course sequence changes, course scheduling, or similar efforts. (3500 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs have engaged in ongoing reflection on student progression and completion, informed by graduation rates, course pass rates, and faculty advising experience. As professional graduate programs serving primarily working adults, the most significant barriers to student success are structural rather than academic, and are largely common to applied public service programs nationwide.

Several potential barriers have been identified. First, the programs include multiple culminating requirements, including a comprehensive examination and a capstone or applied project, which together ensure academic rigor and professional competency but can extend time to degree if students are not well positioned to plan ahead. Second, admissions and application requirements, while designed to ensure appropriate preparation, may present an upfront administrative burden for prospective students. Third, students must navigate course availability and sequencing while balancing full-time employment and family responsibilities. Finally, many students complete coursework in evening formats, which, while increasing access, can intensify time-management challenges for students enrolled part time.

In response, faculty have taken several steps to reduce unintended barriers while preserving academic quality. Advising practices have been strengthened to emphasize early degree planning, including clear guidance on course sequencing, comprehensive exam timing, and capstone preparation. Faculty regularly discuss program milestones with students well in advance to reduce delays associated with culminating requirements. Course offerings are scheduled with attention to predictability and rotation, allowing students to plan multiple semesters ahead even without a cohort structure.

The program has also emphasized flexibility in capstone design and applied projects, enabling students to align degree requirements with professional responsibilities and real-world policy challenges. High-flex course delivery allows students across Alaska to participate while maintaining employment, and faculty continue to refine course design to support engagement and success in online and evening formats.

Looking forward, faculty are considering additional improvements informed by best practices at peer institutions. These include further clarifying gateway course expectations, reducing barriers to entering the program, improving transparency around course rotations, increasing the availability of online courses or flexible course delivery and evaluating summative assessment process around the comprehensive exam and or capstone research projects.

Overall, student success data indicate that course pass rates remain strong and that academic difficulty is not a primary barrier. Rather, time-to-degree is most influenced by external commitments typical of working professionals. The program's approach balances rigor with flexibility, and ongoing review of curriculum structure, scheduling, and advising reflects a commitment to continuous improvement and student success.

- c. **Provide evidence of the overall success of students in the program. For example, you might talk about the percent of students in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field, the percent of students who go on to graduate school or other post-graduation training, and/or the percent of students who pass licensure examinations. You might also give examples of students who have been selected for major scholarships or other competitive opportunities. [Please do not use personally identifiable information.] (3500 characters or less)**

Evidence of overall student success is demonstrated through strong employment outcomes, career advancement, continuation to further education, and professional contributions to Alaska's public sector.

10/20/2025

Graduate tracking data from 2020-2025 includes 40 program alumni—32 from MPA and 8 from MPP, representing graduates across five cohort years.

Employment in the field is exceptionally strong. One hundred percent of tracked graduates are employed in positions utilizing their training or pursuing further education. Specifically:

Forty percent (16 individuals) are employed in direct public sector positions at state, federal, or local government level. Positions include budget analyst, legislative aide, program coordinator, policy analyst, grants administrator, municipal planner, and administrative specialist. The diversity of agencies and functional areas—including Alaska Department of Health, Alaska Legislature, federal agencies, and municipal governments—indicates graduates are prepared for varied career paths.

An additional 12.5% (5 individuals) serve Alaska nonprofit organizations, tribal governments, or Alaska Native economic development entities. Positions include Alaska Native policy advisor, nonprofit program director, and community development specialist. Employment in this sector reflects strong alignment with Alaska workforce needs and demonstrates graduates' ability to navigate cross-cultural and cross-jurisdictional policy environments.

Twenty-five percent (10 individuals) have continued to advanced education or are employed in higher education settings. This group includes graduates who matriculated to law school, doctoral programs in political science or public policy, and individuals employed in higher education administration. Three graduates are currently in law school, positioning them for careers in public interest law, tribal law, or government legal services. One graduate is pursuing a PhD in public policy.

The remaining 22.5% (9 individuals) are employed in healthcare administration, political strategy, consulting, entrepreneurship, union leadership, or military service. These positions draw on competencies developed through the programs, including analytical skills, organizational management, stakeholder engagement, and understanding of policy processes.

Career advancement among alumni provides additional evidence of success. Several graduates have been promoted to supervisory or leadership positions within a few years of completing degrees, indicating they acquired skills valued by employers and were prepared for increased responsibility.

5. Demonstrate demand for the program.

- a. **Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The Demand program review metrics are Ratio of Out-of-Discipline Credit Hours to Total Credit Hours, Number of Program Graduates Who Continue Education, and Number of Program Graduates Who Return to UAA to Pursue an Additional Program. (3500 characters or less)**

Demand for the MPA and MPP programs is demonstrated primarily through enrollment, strong employment outcomes (see above), employer interest, and growing visibility within Alaska's policy community.

Course enrollment data from 2020-2025 shows consistent student participation. A total of 78 course sections were offered, generating 1,497 student credit hours and serving 504 total student enrollments. Average enrollment per section was 6.5 students, appropriate for graduate professional programs emphasizing applied learning and intensive faculty-student interaction.

Enrollment patterns show stability through the pandemic and subsequent recovery. The 2020-21 and 2021-22 years each saw 14 course sections with total enrollments of 104 and 105 students respectively.

10/20/2025

The 2022-23 year experienced a temporary decline (72 enrollments across 14 sections), likely reflecting pandemic-related challenges. However, enrollment rebounded in 2023-24 and 2024-25, with 18 course sections in each year and enrollments of 113 and 110 students respectively.

Popular courses demonstrate areas of strong demand. Introduction to Public Administration and Policy attracted 60 total enrollments over five years. Selected Topics in Public Administration (55 enrollments), Issues in Arctic Policy (50 enrollments), and The Policymaking Process (50 enrollments) also showed strong sustained interest. The success of Arctic Policy reflects student recognition of the program's distinctive Alaska and Arctic focus.

New courses have been well received. Alaska Policy Studies generated 63 enrollments across three offerings, demonstrating demand for Alaska-focused policy content. The Geographic Information Systems for Policy and Planning course attracted 5 enrollments despite being new.

Summer course offerings, initiated in 2023-24, show promise for expanding access and accelerating degree completion. Summer 2024 courses enrolled 5 students, and Summer 2025 courses enrolled 11 students, indicating growing awareness and potential for continued growth.

MPA and MPP courses increasingly attract students from other programs, including business, natural sciences, engineering, and health sciences. This cross-disciplinary enrollment indicates that public administration and policy content is relevant to students pursuing diverse career paths and suggests opportunities for strategic partnerships.

Demand from employers and policymakers provides additional evidence of program value. State agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations have expressed interest in recruiting graduates and have indicated that the combination of analytical skills, Alaska policy knowledge, and professional preparation aligns well with workforce needs.

6. Demonstrate program productivity and efficiency.

Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The Productivity and Efficiency program review metrics are Five Year Degree and/or Certificate Awards Trend, Student Credit Hours per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty, and Full-Time Equivalent Student per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty. (3500 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs operate with a distinctive faculty staffing model that must be understood in context to appropriately assess productivity and efficiency. Most faculty are ISER-affiliated and generate substantial portions of their salaries through external research funding rather than state appropriations.

The department has one traditional tripartite tenure-track faculty member and one term appointment at 0.6 FTE. Remaining instructional capacity comes from ISER-affiliated faculty who typically teach on a 1-1 course load while dedicating majority effort to externally funded research. ISER faculty generate 60% or more of their salaries through grants and contracts, meaning their instructional contributions represent value-added teaching capacity supported primarily through research revenues rather than state general funds.

This model provides several efficiency advantages. First, it allows the program to offer a full curriculum with relatively modest direct investment. Second, it brings active researchers into the classroom, ensuring curriculum currency and providing students access to faculty engaged in policy-relevant work. Third, it creates a sustainable staffing model during fiscal constraints, as nontenure track ISER faculty can shift effort between teaching and research depending on funding availability and enrollment demand.

10/20/2025

The programs strategically utilize highly qualified adjunct faculty with deep practitioner expertise—former borough managers, current state administrators, and policy consultants—bringing real-world experience and professional networks into the classroom.

Graduate tracking data indicates 40 graduates from 2020-2025: 9 in 2020, 4 in 2021, 12 in 2022, 1 in 2023, 7 in 2024, and 5 in 2025. This variation reflects small cohort sizes and variable time-to-degree completion, common in professional graduate programs serving working adults.

The program generated 1,497 student credit hours from 2020-2025 through 78 course sections. This SCH production, though modest in absolute terms, represents efficient use of limited faculty resources and demonstrates sustained student interest.

The faculty model supports productivity beyond traditional metrics. ISER faculty involve MPA/MPP students in externally funded research projects, providing experiential learning while building research capacity. This creates a multiplier effect where student learning, faculty research productivity, and service to Alaska policymakers are mutually reinforcing.

Efficiency improvements have been implemented over the review period. The decision to eliminate MPA emphasis areas in health and justice was motivated partly by efficiency concerns, as emphasis requirements dispersed enrollments across too many courses. The revised structure allows students to take electives aligned with career interests while maintaining stronger core course enrollment.

High-flex course delivery enhances efficiency by allowing a single section to serve both in-person and remote students, expanding access without duplicating offerings.

Optional: Discuss the extent to which, if any, extramural funding supports students, equipment, and faculty in the program. (3000 characters or less)

Extramural funding plays a critical role in supporting the MPA and MPP programs through faculty salary support, graduate student employment, graduate student tuition support, research training, and enhanced instructional capacity. The close integration with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) creates direct pathways for external funding to support program success and student development.

Faculty affiliated with ISER generate substantial extramural funding from federal agencies, state agencies, foundations, and other sources to support applied policy research. These grants typically include provisions for graduate student research assistants, allowing MPA and MPP students to be employed on policy-relevant projects while pursuing degrees. This arrangement benefits students through paid research experience, professional skill development, and networking opportunities, while building Alaska's policy research capacity.

The availability of graduate research assistant positions funded through external grants creates recruitment advantages. Prospective students are attracted by opportunities to gain practical research experience, contribute to policy-relevant work, and receive financial support while completing degree requirements. Multiple students have been supported through ISER grants, conducting research on food security, energy policy, rural community sustainability, and Alaska economic development. Specific projects employing MPA/MPP students include NSF Collaborative Research on Adaptable Microgrids in Arctic Communities, NSF Research on Riverbank Erosion in the Yukon River Basin, a Denali Commission Technical Assistance project employing four students, an NSF subaward on Green Energy Transitions in the Far North, an ACEP project on Diesel Free Heating, and a food spoilage study for rural Alaska retail contexts.

Several program graduates have been employed as ISER research professionals following degree completion, positions typically supported through grant funding. These roles provide career-launching professional experience while building ISER's capacity to compete for additional grants.

10/20/2025

External funding also supports indirect program benefits including professional development opportunities, conference travel, community engagement activities, and research infrastructure. Faculty participation in professional conferences, often supported through grant budgets, enhances program visibility and allows faculty to remain current with disciplinary developments.

Student involvement in grant-funded research provides experiential learning that reinforces classroom instruction. Students apply research methods, policy analysis frameworks, stakeholder engagement strategies, and communication skills learned in coursework to real-world projects with tangible policy impacts. This integration represents a high-impact practice that enhances student learning and career preparation.

7. Assess program distinctiveness, as well as any duplication resulting from the existence of a similar program or programs elsewhere in the University of Alaska System. Is duplication justified, and, if so, why? How are you coordinating with UAA's community campuses and the other universities in the system? (2500 characters or less)

The UAA MPA and MPP programs are distinctive within the University of Alaska system and serve complementary roles relative to the UAS MPA program. The UAS program, located in Alaska's capital, emphasizes public administration with attention to legislative and governmental processes, serving primarily Southeast Alaska students and state employees based in the capital. The UAA program is in Anchorage, the center of commerce and many state and federal government employees based in the population center of the state.

The UAA programs offer three distinctive features:

First, UAA offers both an MPA and an MPP, providing students choices between administration-focused and policy-focused degrees. The MPP is Alaska's only public policy master's degree, serving students interested specifically in policy analysis, program evaluation, and policy research rather than general public administration. Having both programs collocated also means that students benefit from a mixture of public administration and public policy perspectives amongst their peers, leading to a fuller educational experience.

Second, the UAA programs are integrated with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, creating unique opportunities for students to participate in applied policy research that directly informs Alaska decision-makers. ISER's statewide and national reputation for rigorous, nonpartisan policy analysis attracts students interested in research-oriented careers and provides experiential learning not available in a purely instructional program.

Third, the UAA programs have developed specialized expertise in Alaska and Arctic policy, natural resource management and policy, and quantitative policy analysis methods including geographic information systems. Courses such as Issues in Arctic Policy, Alaska Policy Studies, and GIS for Policy and Planning reflect curricular content unique to UAA and responsive to Alaska's and the circumpolar North's distinctive governance challenges.

The UAA programs serve a distinct geographic population, primarily Anchorage-area students and working professionals employed by state agencies, municipal governments, tribal organizations, and nonprofit entities headquartered in Southcentral Alaska.

The UAA MPA program and UAS program are complementary and serve different student populations with some overlapping content but distinctive emphases and unique strengths.

8. Assess the strengths of your program and propose one or two action steps to address areas that need improvement. (4000 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs possess several notable strengths alongside areas where focused improvement can enhance program quality, sustainability, and impact.

Program Strengths:

Integration with ISER represents the programs' most distinctive strength. The connection between graduate education and applied policy research creates unique experiential learning opportunities, ensures curriculum relevance, provides students access to active researchers and policy practitioners, and generates external funding supporting student employment and faculty productivity. This integration makes UAA's programs distinctive within Alaska and attractive to students seeking applied, policy-relevant graduate education.

Alaska and Arctic focus is a second major strength. The programs' emphasis on Alaska governance, fiscal policy, rural communities, Indigenous self-determination, Arctic security, and natural resource management addresses state workforce needs. Course offerings in Alaska Policy Studies and Issues in Arctic Policy attract students interested in place-based policy work. The Arctic security focus is particularly relevant given the programs' proximity to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, which houses military personnel requiring coursework for promotion.

Strong employment outcomes demonstrate program effectiveness. Graduate tracking data shows 100% of tracked alumni are employed in fields utilizing their training or pursuing further education. Employment across government, nonprofit, tribal, and research sectors confirms graduates are prepared for diverse career paths, with multiple graduates advancing to leadership roles within a few years of completion.

Experienced and committed faculty bring deep expertise in public policy, economics, natural resource management, organizational leadership, and applied research methods. Faculty maintain active research programs, advise policymakers and community leaders, and present at professional conferences, ensuring instruction reflects current practice.

Flexible delivery and student-centered design serve working professionals through evening courses, high-flex formats allowing remote participation, and predictable course rotations. The elimination of restrictive emphasis requirements reflects responsiveness to student needs while maintaining curricular quality.

Areas for Improvement:

Action Step 1: Make admissions requirements consistent across UAS and UAA. The UAA programs require additional statements and documents not required by UAS that are not strong predictors of success but can act as barriers for working students. Streamlining the application process should increase applications and enrollment.

Action Step 2: Drop the comprehensive exam. Students currently take both a comprehensive exam and complete a research capstone. The exam is duplicative and not a strong predictor of capstone success. We suggest removing it and continuing to assess progress through course grades and the summative research project.

Action Step 3: Align capstone courses to allow sharing between MPA and MPP programs. The MPP capstone is two semesters while the MPA capstone is one. We suggest reviewing both to bring them into alignment, potentially combining them into one sequence. This would conserve faculty resources, allow students to benefit from shared perspectives, and enable a client-based approach matching UAA's community-engaged mission.

10/20/2025

Action Step 4: Assess a move toward more online course opportunities. Faculty should evaluate allowing more courses to be taken online and asynchronously to conserve resources and increase enrollments, while ensuring sufficient in-person offerings for students with modality requirements, including military students.

9. Over the past two years programs and colleges conducted a comprehensive review of all fees. Moving forward, per the [UAA Course Fee Policy](#), programs conduct a comprehensive review and re-approval of all course fees as part of the cyclical Academic Program Review process. The college's strategic budget officer will conduct a review, and the dean will review the results and work with the program on any changes. The authorized lead, per the Course Fee Policy, will submit forms for each fee, whether to delete, retain, or change the fee. Forms are due to OAA by the regular February 15 deadline.

What was the general outcome of the comprehensive fee review? (2500 characters or less)

Courses with a PADM prefix or included in the MPA or MPP graduation requirements were reviewed as a part of the Academic Review Process. Five courses currently list the CBPP Lab Fee in the Course Inventory Management System (CIM). We propose removing these fees, and will propose these changes to the OAA.

The courses with fees listed in CIM include PADM A601 Introduction to Public Administration and Policy, PADM A618 Public Accountability and Ethics, PADM A634 Natural Resource Policy and Management, ECON A602 Introduction to Economics for Managers, and ECON A625 Economics and Public Policy.

Committee chair first name last name: Kevin Berry

Date: 2/28/2027

END OF PROGRAM SECTION

DEAN SECTION (Due on April 1)

1. Evaluation of Progress on Previous Recommendations

For each recommendation from the last program review, indicate if the recommendation has been met or has not been met and provide commendations and guidance as appropriate. (2500 characters or less for each recommendation)

Recommendation 1: The alignment with the MPP and with ISER seems to be paying off. Think about other ways to expand outreach efforts. Recommendation has been met.

The MPA program has made good progress in leveraging its alignment with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the MPP program to expand outreach and strengthen program visibility in the community. Faculty have integrated applied research activities into recruitment, experiential learning, and professional development opportunities for students. Graduate students are actively engaged in externally funded research projects addressing Alaska policy challenges. These experiences contribute to both recruitment and retention while providing students with valuable applied policy experience.

The programs collaborating with ISER have strengthened outreach through partnerships with Alaska Native organizations, state agencies, federal agencies, and professional policy networks. Guest speakers, research assistantships, internships, and practicum placements connect students with public-sector professionals and expand awareness of the program among potential employers and future applicants. Evidence of success includes strong employment outcomes across state, federal, nonprofit, and research organizations and growing visibility within Alaska's policy community.

I commend the programs for effectively integrating current and new areas of research, community engagement, and pedagogy, and moreover, strengthening their relationship with ISER. Going forward, the programs should continue to build on these strengths by developing more outreach tactics, including targeting early-career public servants and upper level economic students for recruitment, increasing alumni engagement, and expanding collaboration with ISER, professional and public agencies across Alaska.

Recommendation 2: Consider ways to bring the total number of credits into alignment with the Board of Regents 30-credit minimum for a master's degree. Recommendation has been met.

The program thoughtfully evaluated this recommendation and concluded that maintaining a 36-credit curriculum remains appropriate for both the MPA and MPP degrees. The review of peer and nationally recognized programs demonstrates that 36 credits are consistent with professional standards in public administration and public policy education and align with the expectations of employers in the field.

While the program elected not to reduce the total credit requirement, faculty took meaningful steps to improve program efficiency and ensure that curricular requirements remain focused on core competencies. These actions included eliminating emphasis areas that impacted enrollment in core courses and removing the internship requirement for students with relevant professional experience. These changes simplify the degree pathways while retaining the depth of training required for public service leadership roles.

The program's approach reflects thoughtful consideration of both institutional policy and disciplinary norms. Maintaining alignment with national standards helps preserve the value of the credential and supports graduate competitiveness in the workforce and in further academic study.

While the program has decided not to reduce the number of credits, there may be other options, such as duplicating the MBA credit structure. The MBA is a 30-credit program, and students can select an emphasis to achieve the 36 credits. This approach provides students with more options and flexibility.

Recommendation 3: Build a close relationship with state employees and managers to provide them education that can lead to future program enrollment. Recommendation has been met.

The program has made marked progress in strengthening relationships with state government agencies and public-sector professionals. Faculty have integrated state employees and managers into the curriculum through guest lectures, internships, and practicum opportunities, creating meaningful connections between coursework and real-world policy challenges.

Evidence of success includes noticeable employment outcomes among alumni, with many graduates working in the Alaska state government, federal agencies, municipal organizations, and nonprofit entities. The program has also enrolled several current students who are state employees pursuing graduate education while maintaining full-time employment. These relationships strengthen the program's reputation within Alaska's public service community and create a pipeline of future students.

The program has also engaged with professional networks such as the Alaska Municipal League and the Alaska Federal Executives Association and has incorporated Alaska-specific policy issues into the curriculum. These activities reinforce the program's role as a professional development source for public-sector employees across the state.

The program is commended for strengthening ties to Alaska's public workforce. Continued attention should be given to formalizing these relationships through structured partnerships, such as CBPP faculty being invited speakers, facilitating workshops, sitting on boards, etc.

Recommendation 4: The coordination with UAS is a great start and UAA may have much to offer their program if/when they downsize their resources in a declining program. UAA should explore more formally offering to teach specific courses that are mutual to both programs to create more efficiency both here and at UAS. Recommendation has not been met.

While I have listed the recommendation as “has not been met”, I considered it partially met. The program has made some progress in coordinating with the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS). Cross-enrollment between institutions is in place, and the program’s online delivery model allows students across the UA system to access courses. This flexibility expands course availability for students and helps maintain program access statewide.

Administrative coordination between advising units and adjustments to tuition structures have also reduced barriers for cross-campus enrollment. These steps demonstrate a positive commitment to collaboration across the University of Alaska system.

While these developments represent important progress, the collaboration remains largely informal. The original recommendation envisioned a more formal and structured model of shared instruction and coordinated course planning to improve efficiency and reduce duplication across programs.

The program should continue to seek opportunities with UAS for more formal collaboration, including coordinated course rotations, shared instructional resources, and potential joint delivery of specialized courses.

Recommendation 5: Think about how the program puts students first. Recommendation has been met.

The program demonstrates a strong commitment to student-centered design and support. Course delivery formats, scheduling practices, and curriculum flexibility are intentionally structured to meet the needs of working professionals across Alaska. Online delivery options, evening course schedules, and predictable course rotations allow students to balance graduate study with employment and family responsibilities.

Faculty advising and mentoring are also notable strengths. Students receive individualized guidance from faculty and the Graduate Coordinator regarding course selection, as well as faculty guidance on capstone planning and career development. The integration of applied assignments, research opportunities through ISER, and professional networking opportunities further enhances the student experience.

Evidence of success includes consistently strong course pass rates and positive employment outcomes following graduation. The program’s flexibility and relevance appear to support student and workforce needs.

The program is commended for maintaining a focus on student success. Continued attention to reducing unnecessary barriers—such as reviewing admissions processes, evaluating culminating requirements, and credit options—may further improve time-to-degree and program accessibility.

Recommendation 6: Identify at least one opportunity for students to develop each of UAA’s core competencies within the program’s curricular and/or co-curricular offering. Recommendation has been met.

The program has successfully integrated UAA’s core competencies—effective communication, creative and critical thinking, intercultural fluency, and personal and professional responsibility—throughout the curriculum and co-curricular experiences.

These competencies are embedded in core coursework through policy analysis assignments, written and oral presentations, applied research projects, and capstone experiences. Students also engage with diverse policy contexts, including Alaska Native governance, rural service delivery, and Arctic policy issues, which supports development of intercultural fluency and community responsibility.

The small cohort size allows faculty to provide individualized feedback and mentorship, ensuring that students have opportunities to develop these competencies across multiple courses. Co-curricular experiences such as participation in policy forums, research projects, and guest speaker events further reinforce these skills. Student capstone projects and employment outcomes provide evidence that graduates are developing the professional competencies expected of public administration and policy professionals.

The program is commended for aligning program learning outcomes with institutional competencies. Continued documentation of these connections within assessment processes will further strengthen evidence of student learning and program effectiveness.

Provide your analysis of #2-8 below, based on the data provided and the program's responses above.

2. Centrality of the Program (2000 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs are closely aligned with the mission of the University of Alaska Anchorage as a metropolitan university serving the workforce and policy needs of Alaska. The programs prepare professionals for leadership roles across state, municipal, tribal, nonprofit, and federal organizations, directly supporting the public sector workforce that is central to Alaska's governance and economic development.

The programs also align with the mission of the College of Business and Public Policy to prepare students for leadership and to support communities through high-quality education, research, and engagement. By integrating public policy analysis, public management training, and applied research addressing Alaska's governance and economic challenges, the programs contribute directly to the college's emphasis on leadership, community impact, and professional preparation.

Integration with ISER strengthens this alignment by connecting graduate education with applied research addressing critical statewide issues. Students participate in research and policy analysis projects that inform policymakers and public agencies across Alaska. As Alaska's only graduate program combining public administration training with applied policy research connected to ISER, the MPA and MPP programs play a strategic role in preparing the public-sector leaders and policy analysts needed to address the state's economic, governance, and community development challenges.

The curriculum intentionally integrates UAA's core competencies. Effective Communication & Creative and Critical Thinking are developed through policy analysis, research projects, and capstone work. Intercultural Fluency is addressed through coursework examining Alaska's diverse communities and governance contexts, including tribal and rural policy issues. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility is emphasized through applied research, ethical leadership training, and engagement with real-world public policy.

3. Program Quality and Improvement (2000 characters or less)

The program demonstrates a commitment to quality and continuous improvement through assessment of learning outcomes, curriculum updates, and integration of applied research into instruction. Faculty have aligned program learning outcomes with national standards associated with public administration and policy education and have begun preparing for potential NASPAA accreditation.

The program's connection with ISER contributes significantly to program quality. Students benefit from opportunities to participate in externally funded research projects and policy analysis activities that address real-world challenges. This experiential learning provides practical skills and professional networks that strengthen student preparation for careers in the public sector.

The program's suggested curriculum improvements include strengthening the capstone sequence, integrating research methods earlier in the program, and expanding courses addressing Alaska and Arctic policy issues.

These changes can improve the quality of student work and ensure that students develop the analytical, leadership, and communication competencies required in public service careers.

Continued attention to assessment documentation and implementation, pedagogical approaches, and faculty capacity will further strengthen program quality. For example, an updated assessment plan has not been formally approved. The last assessment for the MPA program was 2008.

4. Student Success and the Closing of Achievement Gaps (2000 characters or less)

Student success indicators for the program are generally positive. Graduate course pass rates remain strong, increasing from 82–84% in the early part of the review period to a high of 95% in 2024, before stabilizing at 87% in 2025. These outcomes indicate that students are successfully completing coursework while experiencing academic rigor.

The average time to degree for the MPA program has remained approximately at seven semesters, with an increase in 2024 that appears to be an outlier. This timeframe is consistent with expectations for graduate programs serving primarily part-time working professionals.

Disaggregated pass rate data show variability across demographic groups, due to small sample size, interpretations are limited.

Overall, the data and program narrative indicate that the program supports student success effectively. The program should continue monitoring the course pass rates and advising to ensure students' progress in a timely manner toward completing their degree.

5. Demand (2000 characters or less)

Demand indicators suggest interest in the program and its curriculum. The ratio of out-of-discipline credit hours to total credit hours ranges from 14% to 33% over the review period, indicating that a meaningful portion of enrollments come from students outside the major. This suggests that the program's courses contribute to the broader university curriculum and serve students from other programs.

Graduate tracking data also indicate strong post-graduation outcomes, with many alumni continuing their education or pursuing additional degrees. The number of graduates continuing education ranges from 31 to 51 across the review period, suggesting that the program prepares students for advanced study.

Similarly, between 17 and 31 graduates per year return to UAA to pursue additional programs, indicating continued confidence in the institution and potential opportunities for cross-program enrollment.

The program's focus on Alaska and Arctic policy, combined with its connections to ISER and public-sector employers, supports demand from students interested in public service careers. Continued outreach to public-sector professionals and expansion of flexible delivery options may further strengthen demand.

While the indicators are somewhat good for demand, the challenge is to turn the demand into actual registered students. The MPA averages 13 students and the MPA 9 students (between 2023 - 2025).

6. Productivity and Efficiency (2000 characters or less)

Over the five-year period, the MPA program awarded between two and seven degrees annually, while the newer MPP program awarded between one and four degrees per year. These numbers seem to reflect the small enrollment.

Student credit hours per full-time equivalent faculty (SCH/FTEF) ranged from approximately 123 to 200 during the review period, while FTES/FTEF ranged from 5.1 to 8.3. These fluctuations appear related to enrollment

variations and the program's reliance on faculty who balance teaching with externally funded research responsibilities.

The program's staffing model, which integrates faculty affiliated with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, provides efficiencies by leveraging externally funded research activity to support teaching and student research opportunities. This model contributes to program sustainability while enhancing the applied nature of instruction.

Recent curricular changes designed to strengthen core course enrollment and streamline program requirements may further improve efficiency. Continued attention to course scheduling, enrollment management, and collaboration across programs and campuses (UAS) may enhance productivity while maintaining program quality. Plus creating a 30 credit program.

7. Duplication and Distinctiveness (2000 characters or less)

The MPA and MPP programs are distinctive within the UAA system while maintaining complementary relationships with similar offerings. The MPP program is unique within the system and provides specialized training in policy analysis, evaluation, and research that is not offered elsewhere in Alaska.

While UAS offers an MPA program, the UAA programs maintain distinct characteristics, including stronger integration with applied research through ISER and an emphasis on Alaska and Arctic policy issues. These features create opportunities for experiential learning and research engagement that distinguish the programs from other offerings in the system.

Geographic location also contributes to distinctiveness. UAA serves students primarily from Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska, while UAS serves many students located in the state capital region and across the state. UAS' program is totally online while UAA's program is in-class, hybrid, and online. The programs' collaboration through cross-enrollment and shared online access allows students across the system to benefit from course offerings at multiple campuses.

Overall, duplication within the system appears limited and justified, as the programs serve different regional populations and provide complementary courses.

8. Strengths and Ideas for Moving Forward (2000 characters or less)

The programs demonstrate several notable strengths. First, integration with ISER provides students with opportunities to participate in applied policy research addressing real-world challenges facing Alaska. This connection strengthens both student learning and the program's reputation within the policy community.

A second strength is the program's focus on Alaska and Arctic policy issues, which aligns closely with workforce needs in state government, nonprofit organizations, and regional policy institutions. Courses addressing Alaska governance, Arctic policy, and resource management provide a distinctive educational experience.

Last, the programs also benefit from flexible course delivery designed to serve working professionals throughout Alaska. Online participation options and predictable course scheduling support accessibility and student persistence.

Looking forward, opportunities exist to further strengthen the programs by expanding recruitment efforts (consider political science students), particularly among early-career public-sector professionals. Evaluating various curricular models to increase enrollment and retention should be considered.

10/20/2025

Additional efforts, as suggested, to streamline admissions requirements, evaluate culminating requirements, and coordinate capstone experiences across the MPA and MPP programs may improve program efficiency while maintaining academic rigor.

9. Comprehensive Fee Review (2000 characters or less)

Course fees for all CBPP courses were removed. The course fees in this program may have been overlooked during the removal process. Faculty should submit the changes through CIM to remove the fees.

Dean's Final Evaluation

I commend the program for: (number and list the specific commendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)

- Providing an important graduate pathway supporting Alaska's public sector workforce. The MPA and MPP programs play a vital role in preparing professionals for leadership and policy analysis positions across Alaska. Graduate outcomes demonstrate that alumni are contributing meaningfully to public service and policy development throughout the state.
- Developing a distinctive applied learning model through integration with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). The close connection between the programs and ISER strengthens the academic experience by providing students with opportunities to participate in applied policy research and externally funded projects. In addition, ISER faculty actively teaches in the program.
- Maintaining a strong Alaska and Arctic policy focus. This regional specialization differentiates the program and aligns well with the university's mission to address state and regional needs.
- Serving working professionals through flexible delivery models. Evening scheduling, high-flex course delivery, and online participation options enable working professionals across Alaska to pursue the degrees
- Demonstrating positive student outcomes and professional impact. Evidence presented in the review indicates that graduates are successfully employed in policy and public administration roles or are pursuing advanced education, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in preparing students for professional practice.

I recommend that the program: (number and list the specific recommendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)

1) I recommend suspending with intent to delete the MPA and expand the MPP. Given the limited faculty capacity to support both programs and low enrollment, the college should consider discontinuing the MPA program and expanding the MPP degree with a Public Administration and Management concentration. UAS has a strong online MPA program, converting the MPA to a concentration retains MPP's uniqueness to CBPP. In order to serve the state of Alaska, the MPP program should be offered totally online. UAA can't offer the MPA totally online as that would duplicate UAS. To further support the discontinuation of the MPA, "On Sept. 15, 2016, the Strategic Pathways Implementation Team charged UAA with changing its MPA program to an MPP program in conjunction with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) by June 2017." In 2020, it was recommended and approved to offer a joint MPP-MPA program (memo from the UAA Interim Provost to the VP for Academics, Students, and Research). The AVG enrollment (2023 – 2025) for the MPA is about 13 students, and 9 for the MPP. Focusing and investing in the unique MPP program could reap faster rewards. 2) Structure the MPP with a base of 30 credits, with emphasis areas that will increase the total to 36-39. This structure would be similar to the MBA. When the MBA program was revised to 30 credits, it experienced an increase in enrollment. 3) Develop stackable graduate certificates aligned with Alaska workforce needs, i.e., Alaska and Arctic policy, public policy analysis,

10/20/2025

nonprofit management, tribal governance, or public sector data analytics could expand access for working professionals. Again, this is similar to the MBA program which offers two graduate certificates that are stackable. 4) Develop accelerated pathways from related undergraduate programs. The college should explore a 4+1 pathway linking the BBA Econ program with the MPP. 5) I agree with the Program Review Committee on their Actions steps 2 & 4 listed for #8.

Dean's overall recommendation to the provost: Suspension with Intent to Delete -- Admissions to the program will be suspended, a teach-out process will be developed and communicated to majors, and the program will remain in the catalog until the teach-out process is complete.

If an Interim Progress Report is proposed, recommended year: Select N/A or Academic Year.

If a Follow-up Program Review is proposed, recommended year: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Proposed next regular Program Review: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Dean first name last name: Terry A. Nelson

Date: 3/16/2026

END OF DEAN SECTION

PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION (Due within one week of receiving dean's review)

Are you submitting an optional response? If yes, add your response below, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission. If no, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission.

Select Yes or No.

Optional Response: (10,000 characters or less)

The Program Review Committee appreciates the Dean's thorough review which recognizes the programs' strengths and the constructive spirit of the recommendations. We share the dean's commitment to building programs that are sustainable, distinctive, and responsive to Alaska's workforce needs. Below we respond to each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Suspend the MPA; Expand the MPP

We respectfully ask the provost to consider retaining both the MPA and MPP. Our position rests on enrollment data that, when examined on a per-section basis, presents a different picture than raw totals suggest.

The enrollment gap is smaller than it appears and is closing. Over AY2021–25, MPA-specific courses averaged 6.6 students per section offered, compared to 8.0 for MPP-specific courses—a gap of just 1.4 students. In AY2025–26, MPA courses rose to 7.3 students per section (among courses actually offered) while MPP courses held at approximately 8.3. The trend is convergence, not decline.

Low raw totals reflect infrequent scheduling, not low demand. PADM A640 (Dispute Resolution) enrolled 11 students the single time it was offered in five years—the highest per-section rate of any non-core course in either program. PADM A688 (Program Evaluation) averaged 5.5 per section across just two offerings. Neither course was scheduled in AY2025–26. These courses are being substituted for using non-PADM and UAS courses, in order to more efficiently use faculty resources across the college.

10/20/2025

The MPA capstone outperforms the MPP capstones. When capstones are examined together, all three average 2.7 students per section—the lowest rate in the department—confirming the program review committee’s recommendation to unify capstones. However, within that combined figure, the MPA capstone (A659) averaged 3.4 students per section over five years and 2.5 in AY2025–26, while the two MPP capstones averaged 1.8 and 1.0 respectively. The MPA is producing more completers per section than the MPP.

Eliminating the MPA impacts the MBA. The MBA’s Public Sector and Non-Profit Management emphasis draws from five PADM courses, three of which—A602 (Seminar in Public Management), A603 (Management Analysis), and A608 (Organizational Theory)—are MPA-only courses not required by the MPP. These three courses averaged 7.3 students per section in AY2025–26. Discontinuing the MPA would remove the curricular anchor that keeps these courses in regular rotation, impacting an MBA emphasis area.

We acknowledge the 2016 recommendation to convert the MPA to an MPP. However, the 2020 decision—approved by the interim provost and the VP for Academics, Students, and Research—was to offer both programs jointly, not to replace one with the other. The current dual-program structure reflects the most recent institutional decision and has operated for five years.

The resource savings from eliminating the MPA are limited, but the enrollment risk is real. The four shared core courses must be offered regardless. The three MPA-only courses actively taught (A602, A603, A608) also serve the MBA’s Public Sector emphasis. A640 and A688 are already infrequently offered to limit resource needs, and capstone unification occurs under either scenario—so eliminating the MPA has limited impact on teaching resource requirements. It does risk losing students: the MPA averaged 13 enrolled to the MPP’s 9 over 2023–2025. Students may choose UAS or leave the UA system rather than enroll in an MPP concentration, yielding fewer students across the same sections.

We propose that both programs be retained, with targeted improvements: unifying the capstone sequence, placing A640 and A688 on a predictable biennial rotation, and offering the MPA fully through high-flex and online delivery to serve students statewide without duplicating UAS’s fully online model.

Recommendation 2: Restructure to 30 Credits with Emphasis Areas

We agree with the dean’s recommendation to restructure both the MPA and MPP around a 30-credit base with optional emphasis areas building to 36 credits, mirroring the MBA model. This structure offers students greater flexibility while maintaining the depth of preparation that employers and accreditors expect.

However, we wish to flag an important accreditation consideration. The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) expects accredited programs to demonstrate sufficient curricular depth across its five core competencies. While NASPAA does not prescribe a minimum credit count, the prevailing norm among accredited programs is 36 credits or more. A 30-credit base program could complicate future accreditation efforts if the required competency coverage cannot be adequately demonstrated within that structure. We recommend that the 30-credit base be designed with accreditation alignment in mind, and that emphasis areas be structured so that students pursuing NASPAA-aligned preparation can do so within the 36-credit option. This is consistent with the MBA model, where the 30-credit general degree and the 36-credit degree with emphasis coexist.

We further agree that emphasis areas could serve as building blocks toward stackable graduate certificates (see Recommendation 3 below), creating a coherent pathway from certificate to emphasis to degree that serves students at multiple entry points.

Recommendation 3: Develop Stackable Graduate Certificates

10/20/2025

We enthusiastically support this recommendation. Stackable certificates represent a significant opportunity to expand access, serve working professionals, and build enrollment pipelines into the MPP and MPA.

We recommend beginning with two certificates that leverage existing faculty expertise and course offerings: (1) a Graduate Certificate in Alaska and Arctic Policy, built around PADM A650, A651, and ECON A625, which already demonstrate strong enrollment (A651 averaged 10.0 students per section over five years and hit 13.0 in AY2025–26); and (2) a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management, which could draw from PADM A602, A603, A608, and A628—courses that also feed the MBA’s Public Sector emphasis, creating cross-program synergy.

These certificates would be stackable into either the MPA or MPP, with all certificate credits counting toward the degree. Emphasis areas within the restructured 30-credit programs (per Recommendation 2) would align directly with certificate curricula, so that a student completing a certificate and then enrolling in the degree would seamlessly continue into an emphasis area rather than repeating content. This tiered structure—certificate to emphasis to degree—serves students who may be uncertain about committing to a full master’s program while ensuring that every credit earned has long-term value.

Recommendation 4: Develop 4+1 Accelerated Pathway

We are supportive of a 4+1 pathway linking the BBA in Economics with the MPP.

The MPP’s quantitative and analytical orientation aligns naturally with the economics curriculum, and the existing ECON A625 (Economics and Public Policy) already serves as a bridge course required by both the MPP and the MBA. A 4+1 structure would allow BBA Economics students to begin graduate coursework in their senior year and complete the MPP in one additional year, significantly reducing time and cost to degree.

We note that a similar accelerated option already exists for the MBA (linking the BBA in Management), providing an institutional template for program design and approval. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Economics faculty and the CBPP Graduate Office to develop a formal proposal during the coming academic year. We would also suggest exploring whether a 4+1 pathway from UAA’s BA in Political Science could serve a similar function for the MPA, broadening the pipeline across both programs.

Recommendation 5: Action Steps on Comprehensive Exam and Online Delivery

We agree with the dean’s endorsement of our proposed Action Steps 2 and 4. Eliminating the comprehensive exam will reduce a barrier to timely completion without sacrificing rigor, as the capstone project provides a more meaningful and professionally relevant summative assessment. Expanding online course delivery will improve access for students across Alaska and better position both programs to serve the statewide public-sector workforce. We would like to clarify though, that we suggested increasing hybrid and high-flex options to maintain an in-person option for students that require them. A large pool of potential students exists at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), as well as within our veteran community in the Anchorage area. These students require in-person courses to make the best use of their VA benefits, and we’d like to maintain this option for them. Their programs require degree programs be full time, traditional classroom-setting programs. Weekend programs, On-line courses or attendance at "satellite campus" are not supported (IAW AR 621-1)

Conclusion

We share the dean’s vision of a more efficient, distinctive, and accessible set of programs within CBPP. We agree on the majority of the path forward: restructuring to a 30-credit base with emphasis areas, developing stackable certificates, building a 4+1 pipeline, eliminating the comprehensive exam, and expanding online delivery. Our only substantive disagreements concerns the proposed elimination of the MPA, and maintaining in-person options for students who require in-person courses as a condition of their financial aid. We suggest retaining both degrees,

10/20/2025

unifying the capstones, and building a certificate and emphasis infrastructure that will strengthen enrollment across the entire CBPP graduate portfolio.

Committee chair first name last name: Kevin Berry

Date: 3/21/2026

END OF PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION

PROVOST SECTION (Due on August 1)

Provost's commendations, additional or adjusted recommendations, if any, and other general comments (3500 characters or less):

I generally agree with the dean's commendations, particularly the need to provide a graduate pathway to prepare professionals for leadership and policy analysis in Alaska, the integration of applied learning in partnership with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), and the obligation to serve working professionals through flexible delivery models.

I generally agree with the dean's recommendations, with some adjustment. In particular, the program needs to adjust to current demand, interest, state needs, and student behaviors.

1) Admissions to the MPA will be suspended with the intent to delete and teach out.

2) Admissions to the MPP will be suspended temporarily with a teach out of current students. In AY2026-2027 the faculty will put forward a curriculum revision to the MPP that will result in a degree that is no more than 36 credits, that fully integrates courses that complete stackable graduate certificates, and that culminates in a project or thesis that synthesizes the learning that has occurred throughout the degree. The revision will include a name change to reflect the revised focus of the degree, for example, public policy and leadership.

3) In Fall 2026 the program will put forward the curriculum for one to three graduate certificates of 12 credits, which will be fully integrated into the above master's degree. The graduate certificates will need to be on the Graduate Academic Board agenda no later than its second meeting in October. The program will want to consider areas of UAA's strength, including public policy, health, and leadership, leaning into the strengths of the current faculty and keeping the target audiences of individuals who want to or currently work with policy in government, the government relations side of industry, journalism, and/or the nonprofit sector.

4) The program and college will work with University Advancement to build momentum and excitement about the new graduate certificates, which could be implemented as soon as Spring 2027.

Provost's decision MPA: Suspension with Intent to Delete -- Admissions to the program will be suspended, a teach-out process will be developed and communicated to majors, and the program will remain in the catalog until the teach-out process is complete.

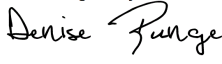
Provost's decision MPP: Suspension -- While decisions relative to the program are made, admissions to the program are suspended.

Interim Progress Report: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Follow-up Program Review: Select N/A or Academic Year.

Next regular Program Review: AY2030

**Provost's
signature:**

DocuSigned by:

AE7EE55F615543D...

Date: June 26, 2026