



Date: February 21, 2020
To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost
From: Karen Markel, Dean, College of Business and Public Policy
Cc: Chad Briggs, Director of Public Policy & Administration
Greg Protasel, Professor
Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review:

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):

N/A

Campuses where the program is delivered:

UAA

Members of the program review committee:

- Chad Briggs, Director of Public Administration, UAA
- Greg Protasel, Associate Professor, UAA

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

The Department of Public Administration administers the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. The MPA Program has a long history at UAA, which shows it to be an integral part of the tradition and identity of the college and university. The public and non-profit orientation of the Department of Public Administration makes it an essential element of the College of Business and Public Policy mission. Research into local government demands and needs of state agencies, federal offices, military personnel, and tribal governance, demonstrate Alaska has a substantial demand for the MPA program.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

Overall, there has been a consistent decline in the number of students enrolled in the MPA program. MPA program efficiency needs improvement as it pertains to emphases and course schedule/offers. The MPA program was identified within CBPP strategic planning to support and develop a new masters of public policy

(MPP), including hiring of a new MPA/MPP director (started Fall, 2019). A transition period is expected with the new program (pending BOR approval) introducing new courses, alignment with the MPA, and in the meantime is supported by only one full-time faculty, with additional courses offered by the director, ISER faculty, and when necessary adjuncts.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

The MPA program has the potential to address the public administration demands and needs of the region. However, this program has suffered from a lack of promotion and marketing, partnering with undergraduate programs at UAA and minimal community engagement. With a renewed attention on these efforts, there is great potential for the program to become profitable and a way to engage the community and students in applied projects. Currently, the University does not offer any support for graduate student recruitment or program promotion so the College will have to develop its own program to support these efforts.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAA offers the only face-to-face MPA program in Alaska. The classroom presence for the MPA caters to the nature of Anchorage as a population, administrative, and military center for the state of Alaska. The UAA MPA program benefits from sharing resources with other departments and institutes in CBPP, such as Economics, ISER, and overlap with the MBA program and the Alaska Native Business minor.

5. Commendations and Recommendations

The recommendation for the MPA degree program to develop a coordinated schedule to provide a more efficient pathway for student success. In order to compete in the intense competitive market of MPA programs, the program should remove all emphasis areas. An MPA program emphasis does not appear on a student's transcript and students can still take numerous courses of elective credit to specialize in a desired area. The College does not have the resources to commit to offering these emphases areas given the low number of students currently in the program and scarce faculty resources.

6. Decision

Revision: Program is required to address specific issues with regards to faculty resources and program sustainability, and to undergo another review within the next two academic years. With the local, government and regional needs this should be a high demand program. However, this program has a small number of majors that may not warrant its continuation in the future. Insufficient faculty resources will also need to be addressed to ensure program sustainability. Depending on the level of changes, curricular revision may require approval by BOR and NWCCU.