

**Site Visit Team Report
Master of Public Administration Program
Department of Public Administration
University of Kansas**

February 24-27, 2008

**Site Visit Team Members:
Stuart Bretschneider, Chair
Susan Gooden
Mark M. Levin**

March 2008

**Site Visit Team Report
University of Kansas
Master of Public Administration Program**

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Summary of Site Visit Team Activities
1. Site Visit Team Members:
 - a. Stuart Bretschneider, Syracuse University, Team Chair
 - b. Susan Gooden, Virginia Commonwealth University
 - c. Mark Levin, City Administrator, City of Maryland Heights
 2. Dates of the Site Visit: February 24-27, 2008
 3. Site Visit Schedule:

Sunday, February 24

Flights:

- Susan arrives on Delta #1573 at 2:55 pm. Will be picked up by Marilu Goodyear
- Stuart arrives on United #7254 at 4:56 pm. Will be picked up by Ray Hummert
- Mark is driving & should arrive by 6:00 pm.

Hotel: Springhill Suites by Marriott, 1 Riverfront Plaza, 785-841-2700

7:00pm Dinner w/ Marilu Goodyear & John Nalbandian Eldridge
Hotel (Marilu will pick up team at the hotel at 6:55 pm)

Monday, February 25

8:45am Marilu will pick up the team at the hotel
9:00amMtg w/ Associate Dean Barbara Romzek 200 Strong
(Ray Hummert will escort the team to Blake Hall)
10:00am Meeting with John Nalbandian & Ray Hummert 328 Blake
(Internships and Placements)
11:00am Meeting with John Stratton, KU Library Liaison to PA 328 Blake
12:00pm Lunch

Lawrence Campus Visit – Stuart Bretschneider

Ray Hummert will escort to Strong Hall
1:00pm Mtg with Maurice Bryan, Assoc Vice Provost for Diversity Strong 250
Ray Hummert will escort to Blake Hall
2:00pm Mtg w/ Justin Marlowe & Michael Moody (Faculty session and budget/finance curriculum & concentration) 328 Blake
3:00pm Break
4:00pm Mtg w/ Lawrence students 329 Blake
5:00pm Mtg w/ Lawrence alumni 329 Blake
6:30pmReturn to hotel with Ray Hummert

Edwards Campus Visit – Susan Gooden

1:00pm Travel to Kansas City with Marilu Goodyear
2:00pm Mtg w/ Bob Clark, Vice Chancellor of Edwards Campus 170 Regnier

2:45pm	Tour of Edwards Campus facilities	
3:15 pm	Mtg w/ Noel Rasor & Marilu Goodyear	270 Regnier
4:00pm	Mtg w/ Edwards Campus students	270 Regnier
5:00pm	Mtg w/ Edwards Campus alumni	270 Regnier
6:30pm	Return to hotel with Noel Rasor	

Public Management Center Visit – Mark Levin

1:00pm	Travel to Topeka with Charles Jones (Director, PMC)	
2:00pm	Mtg w/ Charles Jones & Bev Vogel	210 PMC
3:15pm	Tour of PMC facilities	
3:30pm	Break	
4:00pm	Mtg w/ PMC students	Room C
5:00pm	Mtg w/ PMC alumni	Room C
6:30pm	Return to hotel with member of PMC staff	

Dinner To Be Determined

Tuesday, February 26

8:45am	Ray Hummert will pick up team from hotel and bring to campus	
9:00am	Faculty session #1	
	Holly Goerdel - Stuart Bretschneider	306A Blake
	Chuck Epp - Susan Gooden, Mark Levin	328 Blake
9:45am	Faculty session #2	606 Blake
	Steven Maynard-Moody	
	Faculty session & Institute of Policy and Social Research	
10:30am	Faculty session #3	
	Kelly LeRoux – Stuart Bretschneider, Mark Levin	323 Blake
	Jared Llorens – Susan Gooden	328 Blake
11:15am	Faculty session #4	
	Sanjay Pandey - Stuart Bretschneider, Mark Levin	328 Blake
	Leisha DeHart-Davis – Susan Gooden	322 Blake
12:00pm	Lunch	location tbd
1:00pm	Faculty session #5 – George Frederickson	328 Blake
1:50pm	Ray Hummert will escort team to Strong Hall	
2:00pm	Mtg w/ Provost Richard Lariviere	250 Strong
2:30pm	Mtg w/ Dean Joseph Steinmetz	200 Strong
	Ray Hummert will escort team to Blake Hall	
3:00pm	Mtg w/ Maurice Bryan, Associate Provost for Diversity	250 Strong
	Ray Hummert will escort team to Hotel	
	Dinner	TBD

Wednesday, February 27

8:45am	Marilu Goodyear will pick up team at the hotel	
9:00am	Team work session	328 Blake
10:30am	Mtg w/ Marilu Goodyear	328 Blake
11:15am	Stuart Bretschneider and Susan Gooden leave for airport with Marilu Goodyear	
11:15am	Ray Hummert escorts Mark Levin back to hotel	
12: 30pm	Arrive at airport	

- B. Summary of Basic Facts about the Master of Public Administration Program, University of Kansas I
1. University of Kansas is a public university. The Department of Public Administration currently offers both graduate and undergraduate degrees.
 2. The MPA degree program was established in 1948.
 3. The Department of Public Administration currently offers three degree programs: a Ph.D., a B.A. in Public Administration and the Master of Public Administration

SECTION II. BACKGROUND AND MISSION

The mission of the Master of Public Administration degree of the Department of Public Administrations of the University of Kansas is:

The mission of the Masters of Public Administration is to strengthen the public services in society by educating students to play leadership and management role in the public sector, especially at the state and local levels. The MPA degree stresses development of abilities important to effective and ethical management and leadership of governmental and non-profit organizations. The program combines an established tradition of academic excellence with a dedication to the practical aspects of public management. Our program has a tradition of excellence in educating local government leaders which continues to this day.

The Site Visit Team (SVT) found consistent and strong evidence that the Department of Public Administration has a strong sense of mission that guides it decisions. Even with recent increases in the departmental mission to include two new degree programs, a BA in Public Administration offered at the Edwards Campus, and a Ph.D. program, faculty and administrators repeatedly identified the MPA degree and mission as the core of the departmental mission.

A core focus of the Kansas MPA degree is its “tradition of excellence in educating local government leaders.” This is accomplished by providing a common curriculum at three

distinct locations to two different types of students. Each year the department admits a small cohort of students who have limited work experience into their “intern option” program. Typically 12-14 students, the intern option students spend their first year as full time students while also working in part time paid internships. The second year of the program these students take one year paid internships and complete additional course work for 6 credits to complete the degree. The one year paid internship is a hallmark of this program, which has continued since the program’s beginnings in 1948. The vast majority of these internships are in local government and prepare students for effective careers in city management.

The second type of student, who receives the same basic set of core courses as the intern students, is designated as “career option” student. These students must have at least three years of work experience. Instead of a one year paid internship, career students take six additional elective credits. Most career students take courses on a part time basis while working full time. The SVT found that career and intern option students may take their courses in any of the three locations (Lawrence, Edwards in suburban Kansas City, Topeka-the State Capital) and courses are taught in all locations mostly by the regular faculty. This is, in part, possible due to the unique geography of having Lawrence approximately equidistance from both branch campuses with reasonable travel times. The SVT also found that the University of Kansas has also recently provided regular bus transportation between Lawrence and the Edwards Campuses. As one senior faculty noted by curriculum and pedagogy, the MPA is one degree provided at three locations to two groups of students.

The SVT also found that the department maintains useful and consistent self-evaluation processes that focus on effectiveness of the MPA program. These include student evaluation of courses, exit interviews of students, placement and alumni activity that support program evaluation and internship creation. In conclusion the SVT found that the program’s strong sense of mission is consistently assessed and evaluated and that the department routinely makes strategic decisions that consider and are consistent with their mission.

SECTION III. ITEM-BY-ITEM ANALYSIS OF CONCERNS RAISED BY COMMISSION ON PEER REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION

Item 1: Standard 2.3 Guiding Performance

Standard 2.3 states, “*The program shall use information about its performance in directing and revising program objectives, strategies, and operations.*”

The SSR (p.23) states, with respect to Student Satisfaction with the MPA degree at time of graduation, that “Satisfaction has been weakest in budgeting and fiscal policy.”

The Commission requests clarification as to how the program is using this assessment feedback to direct and revise program objectives, strategies, and operations.

Site Visit Team Analysis:

Discussions with the Department Chair confirmed that the reported dissatisfaction with the Budget and Policy Analysis course and the Public Finance course was appropriately addressed and resolved. The negative feedback reported in the self-study reflected students' dissatisfaction with the teaching of two adjunct faculty members who are no longer teaching in the program. Permanent faculty is now teaching the budgeting and finance courses. Discussions with current students revealed no dissatisfaction with the course.

Item 2: Standard 5.5 Faculty Diversity

Standard 5.5 states, *“There should be evidence that specific plans are being implemented to assure the diversity of the composition of the faculty with respect to the representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.”*

The SSR states, “The Department is not satisfied with our accomplishments in the area of diversity.” The report lists several “additional actions which we wish to take to improve in the area.” The SSR (p.19) articulates plans to improve their program in the area of diversity as well as efforts toward faculty diversity (pp.64-65).

The Commission requests that the Site Visit Team explore the measures the program is taking, with respect to its mission, to promote faculty diversity with regard to faculty recruitment, supplemental diversity efforts and providing a positive and supportive atmosphere for women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Site Visit Team Analysis:

The Site Visit Team had extensive discussions with the Department Chair, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Provost, the Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and members of the faculty regarding the efforts undertaken to promote faculty diversity within the Public Administration Department.

The University of Kansas recently established a direct hire program designed to strengthen a department's commitment and success in hiring underrepresented faculty. The Department of Public Administration was the first program in the college to access these funds which resulted in a new minority faculty hire.

The Site Visit Team also observed that the MPA program faculty includes a number of women and that special efforts are made by the faculty to bring guest speakers from underrepresented minority groups into their classes. The Department has established a relationship with the National Forum of Black Public Administrators for this purpose as well as to assist in recruiting prospective students and faculty.

The site visit team recognized and shared the concern among department faculty and university administration for the need to continue to increase the diversity among its faculty. The program is strongly encouraged to continue to build upon its work in this important area.

Item 3: Standard 4.2 Curriculum Components

Standard 4.2 states, *“The curriculum components are designed to produce professionals capable of intelligent, creative analysis and communication, and action in public service. Courses taken to fulfill the common curriculum components should be primarily for graduate students. Both the common and the additional curriculum components need to be assessed as to their quality and consistency with the stated mission of the program.”*

The Instructions for Standard 4.2 request that the program “complete the following chart showing the distribution of course credits among the various categories. Report the number of course credit hours typically taken by graduates of the degree program.”

A response to Instruction 4.2B was not included in the Self Study Report.

The Commission requests that the program complete this section of the Self Study Report and send to the Commission, for distribution and review by the Commission and the Site Visit Team.

Site Visit Team Analysis:

The missing item (Table 4.2B) was submitted by the Department Chair on December 14, 2007 in response to COPRA’s Interim Report.

Item 4: Standard 9.0 - Off Campus and Distance Education

Standard 9.0 states *“When off-campus and distance education versions of the program serve different missions, student populations, or utilize educational technology or learning methods that differ from the parent program, the burden is on the program to provide adequate information that demonstrates:*

- *the extent to which educational offerings are consistent with and contribute to the mission;*
- *the extent to which assessment and guidance processes ensure the comparability of the education offered;*
- *the effects of these differences on students, faculty, administrators, systems, processes, and the allocation of program resources and, therefore;*
- *the effects of these differences on the education received by all students in the program seeking accreditation regardless of where they are located.”*

Standards 9.2 through 9.8 further indicate the need for assuring comparability in the areas of Program Mission, Assessment, and Guidance (9.2), Program Jurisdiction (9.3),

Curriculum (9.4), Faculty (9.5), Admission of Students (9.6), Student Services (9.7), and Support Services and Facilities (9.8).

The SSR (p.18) states that, “Dissatisfaction with our Lawrence campus space is apparent from our MPA student exit survey. We are seeking ways to improve both the amount of space and its quality on the Lawrence campus and notes a “plan for a more fully robust virtual classroom which we hope to obtain funding for and implement in 2008 (p.18).” In Section 7.1A the SSR states, “Orientations are held for intern-option students in Lawrence and career-option students at the Public Management Center in Topeka and at the Edwards Campus in Overland Park.”

The Commission asks the SVT to investigate the quality of the classroom, facilities and arrangements of all campuses and verify that the program meets all of the requirements of Standard 9.0 Off-Campus and Distance Education.

Site Visit Team Analysis:

The Site Visit Team visited the facilities on the Lawrence, Topeka and Edwards campuses and met with faculty, students and alumni at all three locations. The team is satisfied that the three locations offer the same program in all material respects. Course offerings are the same, although offered in greater quantity at the Lawrence campus. The same faculty teaches the same courses at each campus. Students enrolled in one campus take courses at the other two when necessary or convenient. Support services are provided at the two remote campuses and appropriate arrangements have been made to deliver university services, library services and book sales at these two locations.

Students and alumni unanimously expressed their perception that the MPA program was uniform across the three locations. Faculty differentiated the three locations only by the focus of the students and the differing student cultures at the three sites.

The classroom and office facilities at the Lawrence campus are adequate. Technological upgrades have been made to the department’s network infrastructure as part of a campus-wide effort, but the lack of WiFi access within the building is an issue that has not yet been resolved. The SVT was told by the Chair that new furniture for the Lawrence facility has been requested and funds have just recently been provided.

The Associate Dean acknowledged that space for the program was limited but that the school was exploring possible changes. The University has identified \$300 million in deferred facility maintenance that poses a significant barrier to addressing in any meaningful way the Lawrence campus facilities of this program.

The facilities in Topeka were more spacious and appeared to meet the needs of the program. Topeka students expressed a preference for the Topeka facility over Lawrence, focusing on the ease of parking in Topeka.

The Edwards facility was newer, had technology that met the needs of students and faculty and had excess capacity.

Item 5: Standard 9.0 – Off Campus and Distance Education

The SSR indicates that the program “has formulated a plan and drafted an agreement to begin to offer our MPA degree at Tsinghua in conjunction with the School of Continuing Education and the School of Management and Policy. We anticipate that courses by KU faculty members will be offered partly online and partly in person. At the time of this writing, permission to offer this program has passed all University permission processes,” and that the program will “provide the review team with an updated proposal concerning the initiative when they visit.”

The Commission anticipates this plan and requests that the program attend to all components of Standard 9.0 in its response, with special attention to plans for: assessment, curriculum, faculty qualifications, instruction, placement, attrition, student admissions, and faculty and student diversity as it relates to the American, Chinese, and/or international contexts. The Commission requests that the SVT explore this initiative in detail.

Site Visit Team Analysis:

The Site Visit Team examined a draft document setting forth an agreement between Tsinghua University School of Continuing Education and the University of Kansas to offer a cooperative executive MPA program. The SVT discussed the proposed program with the Department Chair, members of the faculty and the university administrator with whom we met. While significant progress has been made in addressing the terms and conditions of this cooperative venture, the agreement has not yet received formal approval from Tsinghua. It has been approved by KU and the KU board of Regents.

It is the intent of the KU faculty to offer at one of China’s premier universities an MPA program whose design replicates in all material ways the program offered at KU’s three domestic campus locations and which will meet the components of COPRA standard 9.0.

The pedagogy will be different. KU faculty will teach a majority of the courses and the remainder will be taught by Tsinghua faculty. KU faculty will provide both in-class instruction and web-based assignments and feedback, assisted by Chinese teaching associates.

At this stage of the Tsinghua program's development, it would be premature to include it in the reaccreditation being sought by KU. At such time as a request for accreditation of the Tsinghua program is presented to COPRA a decision of whether to treat it as a separate program will need to be reached by both the university and the commission.

SECTION IV. STANDARD BY STANDARD ASSESSMENT

1.0 Eligibility for Peer Review and Accreditation

1.1 Eligibility The site visit team confirmed that the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of Kansas is committed to the use of peer review procedures to assess educational quality.

1.2 Institutional Accreditation The University of Kansas is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

1.3 Professional Education The site visit team confirmed that the mission of the Department of Public Administration at the University of Kansas is to prepare professional public managers to meet the needs and challenges of public service, contribute to the growth of knowledge in the discipline through scholarly activity, and serve government, the profession and the university through the application of our expertise.

1.4 Program Length The site visit team confirmed that the MPA program at the University of Kansas has been in operation since 1948.

2.0 Program Mission

2.1 Mission Statement The site visit team confirmed that the MPA program mission is to strengthen the public services in society by educating students to play leadership and management roles in the public sector, especially at the state and local levels. The MPA degree stresses development of abilities important to effective and ethical management and leadership of governmental and non-profit organizations. The program combines an established tradition of academic excellence with a dedication to the practical aspects of public management. This mission is clearly permeated throughout all aspects of the MPA program.

2.2 Assessment The site visit team confirmed that the assessment is consistent with the information provided in the Self Study Report.

2.3 Guiding performance See detailed explanation in Section III Item 1 above.

3.0 Program Jurisdiction

3.1 Administrative Organization. The site visit team confirmed that the MPA program is located in the Department of Public Administration within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas.

3.2 Identifiable Faculty. The site visit team confirmed that there is a clearly identifiable nucleus of faculty in the Department of Public Administration who regularly participate in the MPA program.

3.3 Program Administration. The site visit team confirmed that direct administrative responsibility for the MPA program is vested with the Chair of the Department of Public Administration.

3.4 Scope of Influence. The site visit team confirmed that the scope of influence is consistent with the information provided in the Self Study Report.

4.0 Curriculum

4.1 Purpose of Curriculum. The site visit team confirmed that the curriculum of the MPA program is designed to provide professional graduate-level education consistent with its mission, as stated in the Self-Study Report.

4.2 Curriculum Components. See explanation in Section III Item 3 of the report.

4.21 Common Curriculum Components. The site visit team confirmed that the common curriculum components are consistent with the common curriculum components of the Self-Study Report.

4.22 Additional Curriculum Components. The site visit team confirmed that the additional curriculum components are consistent with the Self Study Report.

4.23 General Competencies. The site visit team confirmed that the general competencies that students are expected to meet through the core curriculum are consistent with those listed in the Self Study Report.

4.3 Minimum Degree Requirements. The site visit team confirmed that thirty-seven hours of credit are required for graduation in the MPA program. Intern-option students typically complete the degree in twenty-four months (including the full-time internship required during the second year). The completion time for career-option students varies as many are enrolled part-time. Classes are structured as described in the Self-Study Report. A comprehensive examination is a graduation requirement for all MPA students.

4.4 Internships. The site visit team confirmed that intern-option students complete a full-time internship during their second year. There is no internship requirement for the career-option students. Specific internship requirements are described in the Self Study report.

5.0 The Faculty

5.1 Faculty Nucleus The site visit team confirmed the nucleus consists of 13 full-time faculty. The site visit team reviewed the teaching assignments and found the vast majority of MPA courses taught by the full-time faculty nucleus.

5.2 Professional Qualifiers The site visit team confirmed that 100% of the full-time faculty have an earned doctorate.

5.3 Practitioner Involvement The site visit noted that practitioner involvement occurs in the MPA program in several ways. There is a Practitioner-in-Residence program designed to provide intern-option students with professional development support. Practitioners occasionally teach MPA courses and regularly serve as guest speakers in courses taught by full-time faculty. Site visit team interviews noted the academic qualifications and professional experience of the practitioners.

5.4 Faculty Quality The site visit team interviews indicated that there are clear expectations and a supportive environment for new, untenured faculty members. The Department does not provide formal mentoring for untenured faculty, but may wish to consider this in the future given recent growth. The Department of Public Administration has a normal teaching load of two courses per semester (unless a faculty member has significant administrative responsibilities). Faculty members also have research and service responsibilities.

5.41 Faculty Quality - Instruction. The site visit team confirmed that the quality of faculty instruction is based upon principles of excellence. A hallmark of the Department is faculty use of grading rubrics to provide assessments to students. These rubrics provide students with an evaluation of their skill development strengths and areas of improvement. Several of the faculty participate in teaching workshops available through the university's Center for Teaching Excellence.

5.42 Faculty Quality – Research The site visit team confirmed that faculty in the Department of Public Administration have an active and productive research agenda, with consistent publications in the major referred journals in public administration. Faculty scholarship is also evidenced through books and book chapters, as well as technical reports.

5.43 Faculty Quality – Experience and Service Faculty engagement in service is primarily evidenced through involvement in multiple public administration professional associations, as well as service on several journal editorial boards. Faculty members are also involved in service and outreach activities within the local community.

5.5 Faculty Diversity See discussion in Section III Item 2 above.

6.0 Admission of Students

6.1 Admissions Goals and Standards The site visit team confirmed that the department evaluates MPA applicants (both intern-option and career option) based on the potential to complete graduate academic work; leadership experience or potential; and commitment to public service values. The admissions committee utilizes a matrix to rate each applicant based on these criteria. Although both intern-option and career option students are evaluated based on the matrix, admission into the intern-option is limited to about twelve students per year due to the intensive investment required by the department.

6.2 Baccalaureate Requirement The site visit team confirmed that a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university is required for admission into the MPA program.

6.3 Admission Factors The site visit team confirmed the following were used as admission factors:

- a) An application to the Office of Graduate Studies
- b) Official transcript from each college or university attended
- c) Three letters of recommendation
- d) Proof of ability to complete graduate level work (as evidenced through the Graduate Record Exam for intern option students and a written statement from career option students)
- e) Application fee
- f) Three to five page reflective essay
- g) Resume
- h) A sample of written work
- i) An official TOEFL score report for international students

7.0 Student Services

7.1 Advisement and Appraisal. The site visit team confirmed that the advising system and system of financial assistance operates as described in the Self Study Report.

7.2 Placement Service. For the inter-option graduates, the program draws upon an extensive alumni network for paid internship and employment opportunities. The program has a 100 percent placement record of second-year intern-option students into full-time internships. The program also utilizes an electronic jobs bulletin, “Greener Grass” to assist with placement. There is a formal alumni association of Kansas University MPA graduates who are actively involved in student placement services. There is not a formal placement service for career-option graduates since almost all of these students are already employed in public service positions.

8.0 Supportive Services and Facilities

8.1 Budget. The site visit team confirmed that the Department of Public Administration has sufficient financial resources to support fulfillment of its mission.

8.2 Library Services. The site visit team confirmed there is an extensive library services and resources available through a central portal operated by the University of Kansas. Access to print and electronic holdings is extensive. The site visit team met with the library liaison to public administration who serves provides a variety of resources and services (including orientation sessions, research and reference assistance) to all students. These services are available on all three campuses (Lawrence, Edwards, and Topeka) and to university students who are away from campus, such as the second year MPA intern-option students. The site visit team confirmed that the library resources on the University of Kansas serve the needs of students and faculty in the MPA program very well.

8.3 Supportive Personnel. The site visit team confirmed that the MPA program has sufficient clerical and support staff, as described in the Self Study Report.

8.4 Instructional Equipment. The site visit team confirmed that instructional equipment is adequate and consistent with the Self Study report.

8.5 Faculty Offices. The site visit team confirmed that faculty office space is adequate and is consistent with the Self Study report. See discussion in Item 4: Section 9.0 above.

8.6 Classrooms. The site visit team confirmed that classroom space is consistent with the Self Study report. See discussion in Item 4: Section 9.0 above.

8.7 Meeting Area. The site visit team confirmed that there is adequate meeting space available for students. See discussion in Item 4: Section 9.0 above.

9.0 Off-Campus and Distance Education

See discussion in Section III item 4.

SECTION V. COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The site visit team wishes to begin this section by commending the MPA program and its Director Marilu Goodyear for a very well organized site visit. Meetings were arranged in a very efficient fashion and the program accommodated all of our requests. The SVT really appreciated the efforts made to accommodate all our information requests.

The site visit team would also like to commend the MPA program for the following:

- The one year internship program that integrates theory and practice and also links students to the profession in a powerful and unique way deserves our highest possible commendation. This one program has consistently linked the on-campus curriculum to practice and the profession in such a way as to further the mission of the school and enhance its traditional links to alumni in a truly exceptional manner.
- Similarly the ability of this program to maintain strong ties with alumni and the effective use of the alumni organization (KUCIMAT) for curricular development and general advise and support is also worthy of commendation.
- While still being developed, the SVT, found that the development of a skills and competency based rubric to support a portfolio approach to outcomes assessment worthy of note and commendation.¹ Currently targeted to intern option students this rubric is used to help students assess how far along a continuum from Novice to Leader their competencies lie on a number of dimensions organized into three broad areas; decision making, financial resource management, and information management and technical understanding. This rubric is also used to advise students about choices within their internships about which activities and experiences they need to seek out to further their intellectual development.

¹ Marilu Goodyear, "The Department of Public Administration: Sixty years of Learning and Contribution," Departmental Award for Exceptional Teaching and Learning Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Kansas.

- Given that the MPA degree is one program delivered in three distributed locations where students may take all their courses at one site or take courses at multiple campuses, the SVT recognized that a great deal of the success associated with the management of this system requires high quality and responsive student support services. For example, the Edwards campus is a new facility that is equipped with excellent technology and has some excess capacity. Students on the Edwards campus report the support services offered are especially designed to be student friendly, easily accessible and convenient. These support services were of uniform high quality on all campuses and the SVT feels they deserve our commendation.
- The program at the Topeka campus serves mostly state government employees. The presence of the Public Management Center and its provision of the Emerging Leaders Program and the Certified Public Management Program (CPM) have allowed the department to both do a better job at pre-screening mid-career students whose traditional admissions data might be out-dated as well as advertise and promote the MPA degree. Students who complete the CPM program and are admitted to the MPA as awarded 6 credit hours towards the degree. We feel that the cooperative efforts between the department and the Public Management Center in service to the MPA program are worthy of commendation

Recommendations

In the spirit of peer-review, without the intention to have the recommendations below affect the COPRA decisions regarding reaccreditation, the site visit team makes the following recommendations for consideration of the MPA program:

- The department has recently expanded its mission to include two additional degree programs: a small Ph.D. program and an undergraduate degree in Public Administration currently limited to the Edwards Campus. While the department has also had additional faculty lines provided to deliver these programs, the SVT recommends that the department carefully consider any further additional demands on their resources so as to prevent possible erosion of support for the MPA degree.
- Related to the first recommendation, the SVT found that class sizes were edging upward beyond the traditional limit of 20 students and more career option students from Edwards and Topeka were coming to Lawrence to take courses in order to complete their degree in a timely fashion. The SVT found evidence that these changes are, in part, related to managing the growth in new degree programs and faculty resources. The SVT recommends that the department focus some attention to improving scheduling of classes across the three campuses to allow students at each campus to complete their studies in a timely fashion and help to bring class sizes down.
- The SVT recommends that the department review the role of their 831 class, particularly with reference to its relevance to career option students and availability of appropriate options for these students. The self study identified this course as having lower than average student satisfaction and the SVT found

evidence among career students that they had difficulty meeting the course requirements with regard to the set of sanctioned activities based on range of interest and scheduling availability.

- The SVT recognizes that the university faces some significant constraints with regard to facilities in general and has made some investments in the Lawrence Campus facilities to enhance IT infrastructure in Blake Hall. The SVT recommends that the university be encouraged to continue these efforts. Students, most of who have their own computers including wireless capacity, currently were not able to access internet through a wireless approach in Blake Hall but were able to do so outside the building. The ability to do this within class could dramatically enhance the educational experience.
- The SVT team found that a small group of MPA students did not quite fit into either the intern option or the career option program. The most common example were full time international students (e.g. Muskie Fellows) who would arrive on campus in the fall after the full time intern option students had already arrived and taken several classes together. Improved integration of international students has important diversity implications that the program should address. These students also do not take the one year internship. The SVT recommends that the department develop better mechanisms for integrating these students into the program with some attention to integration with the strong alumni program as well.
- While the addition of an African-American faculty member in the department in Fall 2007 is a good step, continued efforts should be made to recruit, hire, and retain faculty members who are from under-represented groups, especially African-Americans. This will increase the diversity of experiences and viewpoints among the faculty, and also will tend to provide students with role models and mentors from a variety of backgrounds. Taking action to increase both student and faculty diversity will enhance the MPA program, and may also make it more attractive to minority students, thus continuing to maintain a diverse student body.