Departmental Self-Study
Master's of Public Administration (MPA)
Department of Political Science
Sonoma State University

2023-2024 MPA Program Review:

Revising the Curriculum, Refreshing the Program, & Future Direction of the SSU MPA Program

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Executive Summary

The Sonoma State Master's in Public Administration (MPA) is a program valued by the University community, producing quality graduates working with distinction throughout the SSU service area and beyond. However, despite this emphasis on a quality program producing strong graduates, the SSU MPA degree is under strain. The quality and availability of academic instruction at SSU is often financially challenged due to on again, off again state budget crises and changing levels of state funding, coupled with campus spending priorities. For example, quality graduate and undergraduate education often find themselves in direct competition with one another as well was with ongoing SSU projects competing for diminishing resources. Changes in resource priorities around constantly changing metrics creates a challenging set of circumstances for strong graduate training.

When we closely examine the SSU MPA program and review past Program Review materials, this competition for diminishing resources is a perennial theme. At present, the MPA program has the need for an update in approach and changes in curriculum as well as conceptualization of how the program is delivered in order to maintain traditional quality and to improve student outcomes. This Program Review sets forth a path to update and change the curriculum, revamping the MPA program in light of these consistently difficult circumstances and changes in mission.

Upon the review of program materials, past Reviews, as well as interviews with relevant individuals, it is clear that: (1) The curriculum needs to be updated; (2) The availability of University data is often not available for use to plan for program offerings and cost efficiency, though this is clearly improving; (3) Anecdotal evidence demonstrates the MPA program serves community needs and the program's value is evident; and (4) Enhancing existing program strengths would provide a stable platform for recruitment and retention of students, expanded opportunities to work within the community, provide support for students to enter the job market, and create a stable, predictable schedule that will streamline the program and improve time to graduation.

A set of five recommendations are offered to transition the MPA program into a new era and a new degree that more readily assures sufficient course offerings, allowing students to complete the program in a timely manner. It is also recommended that certain efficiency measures could reduce the program's cost and that program improvement planning, and community outreach efforts should be supported by the university. Finally, it was concluded that the plight of MPA is part of a larger dialogue about the role of graduate education at SSU made especially acute as permanent faculty depart the University.

Introduction - How This Program Review is Different

This report responds to a request for placing the MPA program on "hiatus" by the SSU Administration made in late November 2022 with the need for a review of the program in light of providing a deeper "strategic plan and curricular revamp" for SSU's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. The term "strategic plan" means different things to different audiences, so the first step in the project was to meet with the primary "customers" of the plan: recent and past Coordinators of MPA program to include: Dr. Emily Ray, the most recent T/TT faculty member having previous service as Coordinator of the program, as well as recent Lecturer colleagues who served as MPA Coordinator including Dr. David Sul, Norma Martinez-Rubin, DPA, and Diane Brown, MPA, as well as former Deans of the School of Social Sciences, Dr. Elaine Leeder and Dr. John Wingard; and former students (graduates) of MPA as well as community leaders who have previously been involved with MPA. Rather than a traditional strategic plan or Program Review (PR) focused on defining or refining the mission and strategic goals of the MPA, previous Coordinators, as well as the former Deans and students and supporters of the program offered instead that an analysis of potential future approaches for leading the program into a new direction, with a recommended best course of action, as well as other recommendations to improve the program should follow for what comes next for MPA. This report attempts to address these calls.

Therefore, as part of the [SSU "Program Review" process](), this Review is distinct in that it is both part of a, "Regular program review [that] supports academic excellence and integrity, and is required by SSU, the CSU, and our accrediting body, WASC Senior College and University Commission," yet is also a report intending to revitalize and re-conceptualize the MPA program at SSU.[1]

This internal review makes clear that the MPA program has a bright future yet one that needs greater flexibility to meet changing patterns of demands by employers in the public, non-profit, and private spheres. Therefore, this review proposes to shift the curriculum in a new direction in order to leverage past strengths, improve student outcomes, and emphasize the changing, interdisciplinary nature of policymaking.

The conclusions reached herein are meant to propose a meaningful and University- and School-wide effort to revitalize MPA into a new model that focuses on more forward-looking professional, practical preparation, while lowering overall units to degree, and updates the curriculum, while creating a new degree that more closely mirrors anticipated future needs.

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[1] See the SSU Academic Programs website on Program Review found here:
https://academicaffairs.sonoma.edu/academic-programs/program-review

Background

Context for Graduate Education as SSU

Decades ago, young and energetic faculty champions founded most of SSU's graduate programs[2]. SSU was an institution that encouraged faculty innovation and supported their passion and industry. Today graduate education at SSU is being pitted in direct competition with undergraduate education for a share of diminishing resources. In the past, capital versus academic investments are the priority, often established without effective consultation with Graduate Coordinators and departments. Until just this current Academic Year (AY), there were no new stateside graduate programs initiated in the past decade and a half or more and few new faculty champions have emerged until a recent proposal to create a new stateside graduate program (for example, including the substantial changes of the successful CRM graduate program to include a new MS program in Cultural and Heritage Resource Management). The progenitors of initial programs are retired and the last champions will be in a short while. We are experiencing both a generational shift in T/TT faculty as well as a shift in training with more cross- and inter-disciplinary training of Colleagues within our Schools as well as across department boundaries and discipline-specific areas.

There appear to be two additional interests by the SSU administration over the last decade as well. First, there are more recent moves, in the last five years, to provide room for these cross-department programs to include elements of training and faculty interest across traditional departments, such as with History, Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Administration / Political Science. These proposals have also included designs at times for cross-School arrangements such as with the aforementioned departments as well as with Chicano and Latino Studies (CALS) and Native American Studies (NAMS) departments.

Second, there is frequent administrative interest in placing some graduate programs on a self-support basis and there is usually active debate about this on campus. This discussion has moved into flux somewhat as the reorganization and AMP (Academic Master Plan) processes have proceeded in the current AY.

Oftentimes, the "self-support" discussion leads to lower morale among faculty where all too often, SSU graduate programs are sustained due to the willingness of faculty to work overloads. There is no strategic campus vision regarding how graduate education can enhance undergraduate education and improve diversity and further professional training. This situation makes it virtually impossible for graduate programs to succeed in the future,

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[2] The number of graduate programs at SSU reported by the university is misleading. For example, while the Academic Affairs webpage lists 16 graduate programs (http://sonoma.edu/academics/degree-programs), with only one in the School of Business, there would appear to be three distinct Master Degree programs in this School. The actual number of programs on campus would appear to be 21, but is confusing as laid out above.

even should programs be transitioned to the School of Extended and International Education (SEIE).

History of the SSU MPA Program

The CSU system currently has 17 Master's level graduate programs in public administration public affairs, and/or public policy.[3]

The MPA program at SSU was initiated more than 45 years ago. It was created by Professor David Ziblatt as a "MA Degree in Community Involvement" and was transitioned to a "MA Degree in Public Administration" by Professor Don Dixon and others in the early 1980s. The prevailing view at that time was that every Social Science major should have a Master's Degree component. Similar to a model developed at San Diego State University, the core analytic courses in the MPA Program were envisioned as a hub that other disciplines could use in building their own MA requirements. This happened to some extent in several disciplines, yet the setup changed over time and discipline-specific independent graduate programs eventually emerged in a number of disciplines. Today, SSU's MPA consists of a graduate degree with two optional concentration tracks: **Public Management (PM)** and **Non-Profit Management (NP)**. Students interested in the non-profit sector previously had the option of sidestepping the MPA degree and enrolling instead in a Certificate Program on the Administration of Non-profit Agencies. This Certificate option was disbanded in 2017. Courses in this Non-Profit Certificate, however, were applicable to the MPA degree and most students with a Non-Profit emphasis also completed the MPA program. The last substantial revision to the curriculum was made in AY 1999 – 2000.

The program's curriculum is consistent with standards of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), yet SSU's MPA is not accredited. The major obstacle to gaining accreditation is SSU's failure to staff the program in keeping with certification requirements: a faculty nucleus of no less than five full-time persons with at least 50 percent of courses taught by full-time, dedicated tenured and tenure-track (T/TT) faculty is required for accreditation.

Program Purpose and Previous Program Learning Objectives (PLOs)

According to the 2009 MPA Program Review,

> "The basic educational purposes of the MPA program are to enhance
> students' knowledge of the political, economic, and social context of
> public and non-profit administration; strengthen their ability to analyze
> and evaluate issues of policy implementation; develop their competence
> in public policy analysis; improve their ability to evaluate dilemmas of

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[3] See: https://www.calstate.edu/attend/degrees-certificates-credentials/Pages/search-degrees.aspx and also: https://www.chea.org/network-schools-public-policy-affairs-and-administration-commission-peer-review-and-accreditation

management, labor, and human resource development in both the public and non-profit sectors; and develop students' ability to analyze the budgetary and ethical problems that confront civil servants and non-profit administrators."

We propose to revise the Program Purpose of MPA with specific, new Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) noted in **Option #7** in the pages below. These new PLOs also will reflect a new curriculum and type of degree and are examined more fully with **Option #7**.

Summary Data – School of Social Sciences, POLS, and MPA

Table 1. below summarizes the data for the School of Social Sciences in the current AY (2023-2024) along several metrics.

Table 1. School of Social Sciences Summary Table, AY 2023-2024

AY 2023-2024
School of Social Sciences
Summary Table

Department	TT Fac	TT FTEF	Lecturer FTEF	Tenure Density	Majors	Majors/ TT FTEF	FTES	SFR
Anthropology	5	4	2.1	66%	81	20.2	137.7	23.4
CCJS	5	5	1.3	79%	196	39.2	128.7	22.0
GEP	6	6	2.7	69%	162	27.0	158.4	20.3
History	8	7.5	0.8	90%	134	17.9	187.6	22.9
Human Development	1	1	0.0	100%	70	70.0		
Political Science	5	5	3.2	61%	144	28.8	164.3	23.0
Psychology	9	8.5	6.8	55%	682	80.2	454.9	31.2
Sociology	7	7	2.3	75%	245	35.0	203.6	22.4
WGS	3	3	1.0	75%	42	14.0	97.3	25.1
Social Sciences	49	47	23.5	67%	1756	37.4	1619	22.9

Data
TT Faculty – Anticipated AY 23/24
Lecturer FTEF – from AY 22/23
Majors – from F22
FTES and SFR – from AY 22/23 APDB

There can be some confusion with institutional data for programs like MPA due to the merging and tracking of both graduate students and undergraduate students. The data are often conflated with measures of both levels of students in the overall "picture" of what is occurring with departments. For example, a practitioner-heavy professional program that needs Lecturers funded by soft-dollars can impact the budget of a department where Lecturer FTEF (Full-Time Equivalent Faculty) are needed at the undergraduate level to meet target, typically for General Education courses. Thus, breaking out the Lecturer needs for graduate versus undergraduate programs is a recurring theme and need for appropriate data and budgetary analysis.

Table 2. POLS Summary Table, AY 2023-2024

Department Data Sheet
AY 2023-2024
School of Social Sciences
Department of Political Science

Faculty
Tenure-Track Faculty Members (5)
5 FTEF
3 Full Professors
2 Associate Professors
0 Assistant Professors
0 FERP

Name	Rank		Leave	
Boaz, Cynthia	Professor	Chair		
Gin, Willie	Associate			
McCuan, David	Professor			
McNamara, Robert	Professor			
Ray, Emily	Associate			

Lecturer Faculty Members
3.2 FTEF (AY2022-2023)
Tenure Density – 61%

Students
Majors = 144 (F22)
UG Majots = 119 (F22)
MA Students = 25 (F22)
Majors/TT Faculty = 28.8
FTES = 164.3 (AY22-23)
SFR = 23.0 (AY22-23)

Table 2. Summarizes the personnel, POLS majors and minors, as well as FTES and SFR. Program Faculty devoted to MPA and the breakdown of responsibilities for POLS are noted below after discussion of graduate student enrollment.

Enrollment

There currently are 39 students enrolled in SSU's MPA Program. This data is pulled from the GSO (Graduate Studies Office) and is distinctly different from that data derived from SSU Institutional Research (IR). One reason for this difference is that the GSO data includes students who are still under the seven-year time limit to degree yet also may not be currently enrolled <u>or</u> may be enrolled via Extended Education in courses like POLS 578 Project Continuation.

The current number of MPA students served make the program the fourth largest of the 21 graduate programs at SSU and the single largest in the School of Social Sciences. This enrollment is fairly steady across the past eight years. For AY 2022-2023, 44 students were enrolled, with 48 students enrolled over the 2021-2022 AY.

Currently, 28 students are enrolled in the Public Management (PM) track and 9 are in the Non-Profit (NP track. 2 students are not categorized. This enrollment breakdown has varied over time although Public Management students are usually more numerous than Non-Profit versus students. At present, the enrollment pattern is trending towards a recent decrease in Public Administration students. Of course, with the request by the SSU Administration to place the program into "hiatus," future enrollments are suspended.

There are past concerns that enrollment data were not being recorded and reported with fidelity by SSU. The external program reviewer in a 2009 report lamented:" there exists a clear divide between what is reported to the CSU for MPA student's data and what records exist on file in the SSU PeopleSoft records system. This discrepancy is consequential for our program and for information that drives resource allocations."

This situation appears to be largely corrected with additional resources and accessibility to data provided by SSU Institutional Research (IR) since the 2009 Program Review. However, there are some data gaps in "student numbers" by SSU-IR with those gaps picked up now by the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) over the last three semesters (Fall and Spring 2023; and Fall 2023) with more accurate student numbers reflected by in-semester reports by Megan Kane of the GSO. These fantastic reports more accurately reflect true program student census numbers and progress and occur twice per semester.

An additional area to provide more information on potential enrollment is for "demand" or potential admission to the program. This is an area where a lack of data inhibits measuring demand for admission. Therefore, one strong consideration for revision is to request timely tracking data of inquiries into graduate programs such as MPA. This tracking data should include both University-level admissions data points as well as MPA program data points and would include general inquiries, registered meetings for more information,

follow-up appointments, yet also have different levels of data points as part of the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) process. One goal would be to merge efforts between Graduate Admissions and the Graduate Studies Office as well as individual programs – as much effort is lost at the front end as we seek to grow programs with sustained, strategic targeting of initial and early inquiries. For example, the SSU MPA program, after the "hiatus" request was made, had 24 applications started or "in-progress" with another 27 requests for further information about the graduate program made directly to the MPA Coordinator. While this would not lead to a yield rate of more than 50 students into the graduate program, it does provide us an anecdotal account of community interest as enrollment at SSU faces pressure. We would call for a more systematic and coordinated effort to sustain inquiries and turn those into admission potential via stronger tracking and reporting processes rather than just remain department-based anecdotes. .

Faculty Profiles – MPA Program and POLS Department

Permanent Program Faculty – MPA / POLS Faculty Who Have Taught For MPA

David McCuan (University of California at Riverside): Professor McCuan joined the faculty in 2003 and is the immediate past Chair of the department, now serving as the MPA Coordinator.. He previously served as MPA Coordinator from Fall 2003 to Summer 2013. Professor McCuan does research in two areas – state and local elections, particularly political campaigns and the general impact of ballot measures in California and other states; and the study of terrorism. He has held a position as a joint faculty member with the U.C. Davis-Sonoma State Joint Doctorate Capital Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Ed.D Program. He has extensive overseas experience that includes teaching and research in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. He was a Fulbright Teaching Scholar from 2009 to 2010 working in the Czech Republic and also has taught at Jeju National University, Jeju, South Korea. He has an ongoing project for the California Initiative Project that examines data and creates case studies on the state's direct democracy experience. He also continues to provide extensive analysis of politics to international, national, regional, and local media outlets.

Emily Ray (Virginia Tech): Professor Ray joined the faculty in Fall 2015 and was the MPA Coordinator from Fall 2015 until Spring 2021. Her research is at the intersection of environmental political theory and environmental politics and policy. Her expertise is in environmental political theory and politics, with particular interest in the intersections of climate change, technology, outer space policy, land-use disputes, and social theory. She is a prolific scholar within her field over the past eight years. A sample of her publications include one on reimagining radical environmentalism; another on tar sands production, refinement, and transport with particular interest in the experiences of First Nations communities and women and their legal entanglements with the Canadian government; another publication analyzing the sexualization of resource extraction in North America; and a critical analysis of the discourse of outer space mining as a response to climate change. She was also recently the co-editor of a special issue in the journal *Theory and*

Event focusing on environmentalism and political theory. She is currently working on a book on doomsday prepping for a major university press.

Willie Gin (University of Pennsylvania): Professor Gin joined the faculty in Fall 2018. His research is primarily in the field of minority politics, especially with regard to racial and ethnic politics, with interests in American political development, class and inequality, and technology and politics. He is the author of the book *Minorities and Reconstructive Coalitions: The Catholic Question* (2018), which looks at the transformation in the image of Catholics from stigmatization to normalization in three countries. He has also authored an article published in *Politics and Religion* comparing the use of religious rhetoric by politicians in three countries, as well as another article published in the *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* on the use of big data and its potential effects on increasing class inequality. He is currently working on projects exploring how partisan affiliation affects attitudes on race and class within the Democratic party.

Permanent Faculty – POLS Faculty Who Have Not Taught For MPA

Robert McNamara (University of Geneva): Professor McNamara joined the faculty in Fall 1996. His scholarly interests include the role of civil society in the developing world, with a particular focus on Latin America. Within Latin America, this theme is of importance when considering the history of authoritarianism, the legacy of populist governments, and the evolving role of civil society and social movements. More specifically, he has researched in the role of gay rights movements within this context. His most recent work "Populism's Perseverance in Latin American Politics" is currently under review. Professor McNamara's extensive travels throughout the developing world are meant to inform his teaching in the areas of international relations and comparative politics of the developing world. Professor McNamara has also been actively involved in public health issues. He served as a Commissioner on the Sonoma County Commission on AIDS, co-chaired the Sonoma County HIV Prevention Planning Group, and co-authored "Sonoma County 3-year Plan for HIV Prevention."

Cynthia Boaz (University of California at Davis): Professor Boaz joined the faculty in Fall 2008 and is the current Chair of the department. Her expertise is in civil resistance, quality of democracy, gender politics, and political communication. Her work in civil resistance studies has taken her to India, Australia, Chile, Spain, and around the United States. She has interviewed Nobel Laureate Dr. Shirin Ebadi of Iran and has worked alongside veterans of the struggles in South Africa, Serbia, Burma, and the US Civil Rights Movement, including Rev. James Lawson. Dr. Boaz has published numerous book chapters and several peer-reviewed articles, and has contributed many pieces to popular media, including Truthout, Huffington Post, Common Dreams, Waging Nonviolence, Alternet, and Open Democracy. Dr. Boaz is the Faculty Advisor for the nationally award-winning Model UN delegation, which won Outstanding Delegation at the NMUN conference in New York in 2019. Dr. Boaz's current research project looks at the links between abortion bans and women's quality of life in ten states and in the summer of 2021, she interviewed dozens of women about their

abortion experiences in states such as Texas, Mississippi, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.

Faculty Resources and Program Leadership

Dr. David McCuan currently coordinates the program (among the duties include: student and Lecturer recruitment, student advising, and generally tending to student and program needs including planning and budgeting, for a full list of "Coordinator Duties" see the APPENDIX) with an allocation of four units per semester of release time. Dr. McCuan returned to the MPA Coordinator role in Summer 2022, having previously served as MPA Coordinator from 2003 to 2013.

The previous T/TT Coordinator, Dr. Emily Ray, served in that role from Fall 2015 to Spring 2021 while an Assistant Professor. Lecturer Norma Martinez-Rubin stepped in to serve as MPA Coordinator for Fall 2021, while Lecturer David Sul served in the role during the Spring 2022 semester.

Drs. Ray and McCuan were the only non-retired, regular faculty members teaching in the program during much of this time from 2015 to 2022, supplemented by Adjunct Colleagues as needed. Dr. Gin taught one course for MPA upon joining the faculty his first AY and has taught two courses since that time.

The high level of POLS faculty service load in on-campus and CSU activities (with low level replacement funding) and the increased General Education enrollment targets competed with the availability of faculty to teach in the MPA program. In addition, the loss of permanent FTF during this timeframe affected the availability of experience faculty to teach in the department and in the graduate program. Across the past eight years alone, the POLS Department is down an overall net of 4.5 full-time, permanent faculty members as NOT replaced with the losses of Drs. Dixon, Kramer, Merrifield, Ziblatt, Nelson, and Parness along with no part-time replacement of Dr. Apolloni (who taught four units a year directly for MPA). The loss of these six and a half (6.5!) FTEF replaced by two FTEF (Drs. Ray and Gin) has severely impacted the delivery of courses, regular administration of both undergraduate and graduate programs and service to students and the University. For example, Professors Dixon, Kramer, Ziblatt, and Merrifield all taught courses in the MPA program and/or prerequisite courses for the graduate program, as well as advised students, worked on Culminating Projects such as Theses or Comprehensive Exams or Capstone Projects, and served the needs of robust student-faculty interactions building a strong, successful graduate program. Any additional loss of FTEF would be deleterious.

In the past few years, with the exception of Dr. McCuan, and occasionally Dr. Ray and Dr. Gin, all courses in the MPA program were taught by community practitioners. This situation makes it hard to offer all courses needed by students to graduate in a timely, predictable manner. The addition of Dr. Willie Gin to teach one to two courses per year for MPA could alleviate some pressure here. If this were to occur, along with Dr. Ray (teaching one course for MPA per AY) and Dr. McCuan (teaching one to two courses per year for

MPA), some burden on the demand-side for classes could be alleviated. However, one core strength of the SSU MPA program is a focus on practical skills and knowledge for this professional graduate degree.

The MPA benefits from a qualitative standpoint by having both regular faculty and specialty faculty from the community – theorists and practitioners – since there needs to be a blend of theory and practical material with a renewed emphasis on the latter. SSU's program, however, sorely needs an additional infusion of regular faculty participation. The low level of tenure/tenure track faculty participation in the program, coupled with the second smallest Tenure Density in the School (see **Table1.** & **Table 2.),** and the fact that the historical champions of the program have now retired, are beginning to cause concern among faculty that the program is not as academic as it should be with n a loss of both institutional memory and faculty champions. As the external reviewer stated in 2015, "The MPA program faces a crisis with respect to having sufficient permanent faculty to sustain, much less further develop, the MPA program." Challenges for the program have become worse since then.

MPA is not alone in terms of its instability at SSU. State budget cuts, competing campus priorities, non-replacement of retiring faculty, and over reliance on Lecturers often place graduate programs at risk of closure. In the past, some argued that the MPA program would be perfectly viable if its founder hadn't retired and not been replaced and if the university had not decided to staff it with Lecturers.

It is an unfortunate fact that graduate education in general at SSU, with the MPA program being no exception, is subsidized by the generous willingness of regular faculty to work overloads in areas such as thesis committees and internships. For example, Dr. McCuan in past semesters was listed on the Political Science Department schedule as being potentially responsible for 27 to 32 units in periods extending from Spring 2011 to Fall 2014 alone.

Overall Faculty Resources: POLS, MPA, & Assessing Student Needs Not in A Vacuum

The context of **Faculty Resources and Program Leadership** should be placed into some perspective given the overall picture of the health and conditions of the POLS department itself. This section provides such data on those conditions of program health.

While FTES has increased for undergrads in Political Science (POLS), Full-Time-Equivalent Faculty (FTEF), which consists of both tenure-track faculty and lecturers, has only slightly increased **(Figure 1)**. Thus, in terms of FTEF, POLS remains the second largest within the School of Social Sciences (SSS).

Figure 1. Full-Time-Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) Growth, 2014-2020
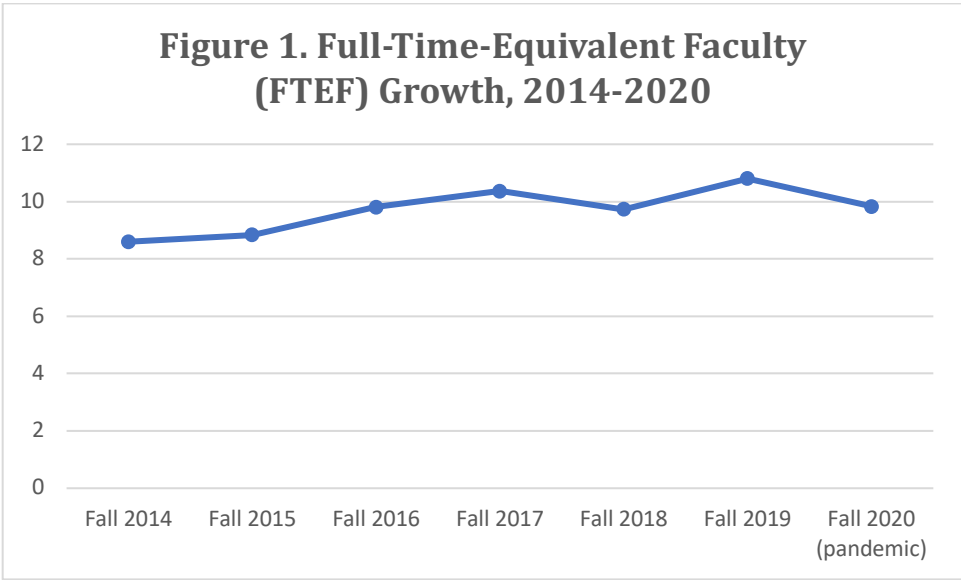
The Student-Faculty Ratio (SFR) as calculated by FTEF divided by FTES, was essentially flat from 2014 to 2019 **(Figure 2)**. The Political Science department remains within the top three departments in terms of highest SFRs through Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 in the School of Social Science. This is the case for the undergraduate program despite the erosion of FTEF.

Figure 2. Student-Faculty Ratio, Political Science, 2014-2020
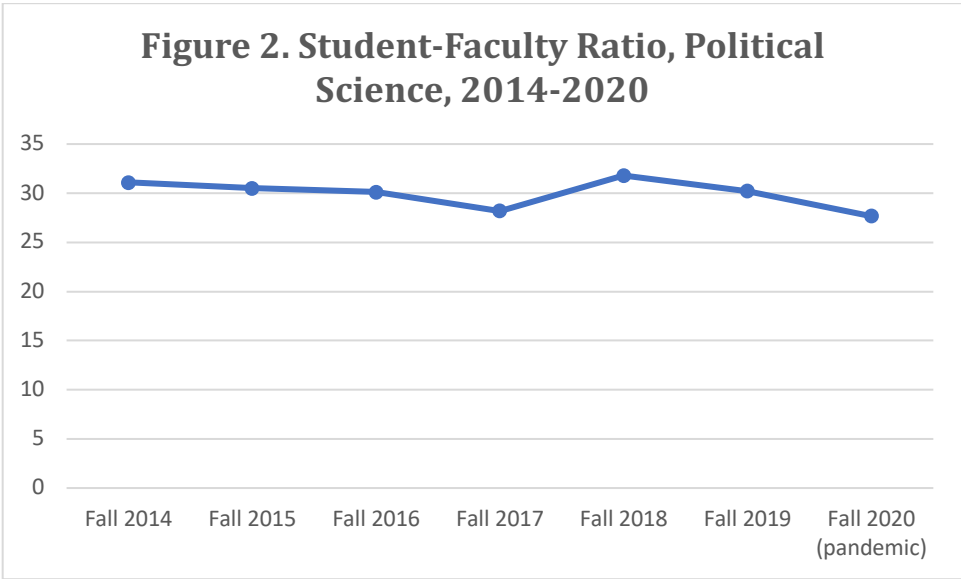
The number of tenure-track faculty remained fairly constant over the time period from 2014 to 2019 (**Figure 3**). While a new tenure-track hire was made (Dr. Gin, 2018), that position made up for a previous early retirement. As depicted in the graph, the tenure-track number fluctuates given that there is an adjustment made based on administrative duties

and other release arrangements (i.e. sabbaticals) of FTEF. What this indicates is that growth of students within POLS courses was largely met by increase in usage of lecturers who have adjusted to and absorbed this increase in student demand. This affects available resources for dollars to fund graduate courses as well due to the need to pay Lecturer (Practitioners) in the MPA program. There is a clear trade-off to be made – make target in the undergraduate curriculum versus fund graduate courses at some predictable level.

Figure 3. Tenure Track Faculty, Political Science, 2014-19
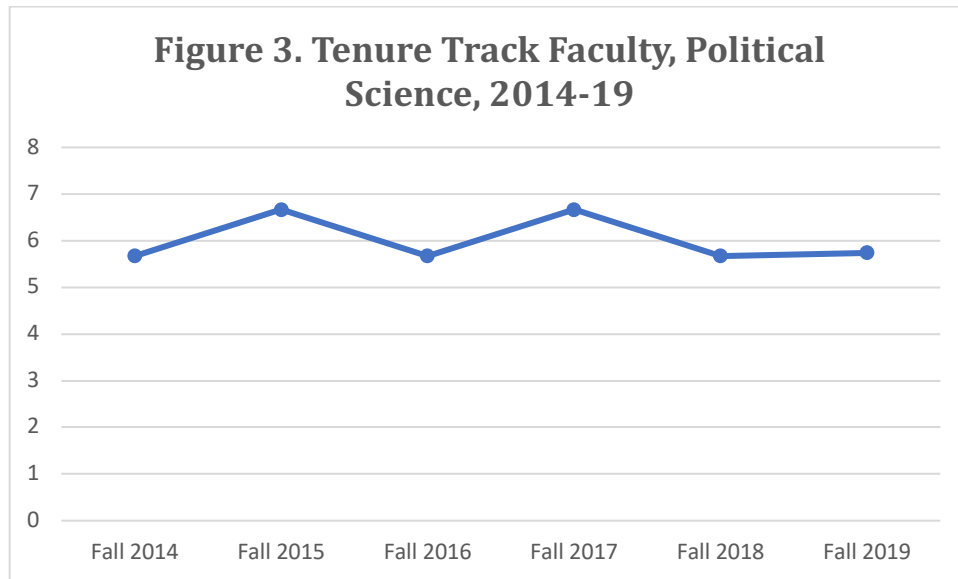
While SFR has remained flat, there are consequences to the growth of the undergraduate major not captured in the SFR number. Since FTEF also remained constant, the majors-to-tenure-track-faculty ratio increased (**Figure 4**). This has consequences for both advising and teaching, spilling over to access and availability for serving graduate students as well.

Figure 4. Majors to Tenure Track Faculty (Minors Not Included)
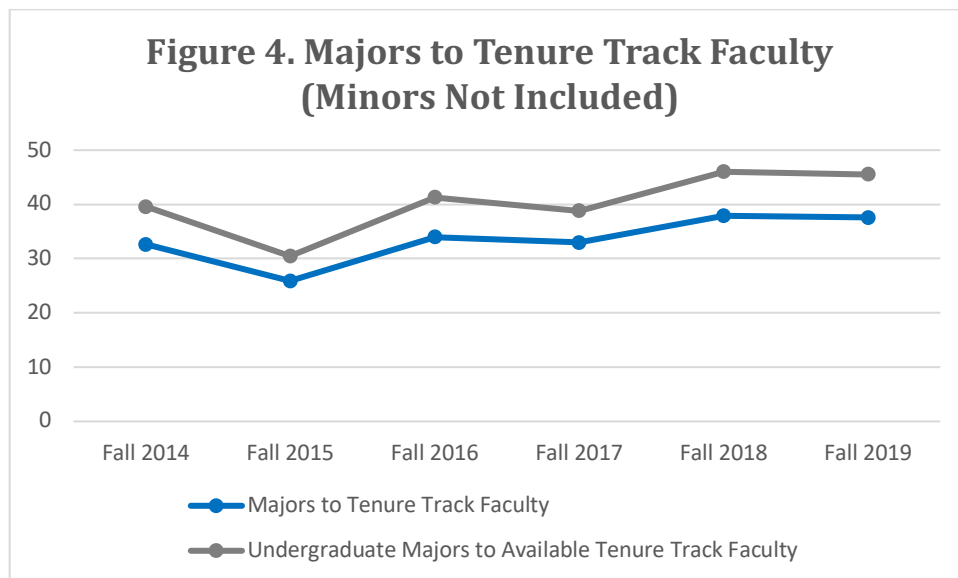
One consequence with the increase in POLS undergraduate majors is pressure on the advising workload within the department. Looking only at majors, the number of majors relative to tenure track faculty increased. The tenure track statistic does not actually capture the advising workload, as one tenure track faculty member (McCuan) is devoted to advising for the Masters in Public Administration program (which itself has experienced substantial growth, leaving that one advisor a greater workload, on average, as well). This leaves one less tenure-track faculty for undergraduate major advising.

The grey line in **Figure 4** captures this correction. Even without the correction, the POLS department is above average in its majors-to-tenure-track-faculty ratio, ranking fourth in the School of Social Science in advising workload (behind Psychology, Sociology, and Criminal Justice).

Given this correction, advising within POLS looks to be well above the average of 31.6 ratio of majors-to-tenure-track faculty within the School of Social Sciences. Past external reviewers have also noted that the system of dividing up advising equally among tenure track faculty can "create workload issues when faculty are on leave – increasing the burden on everyone else."

Advising remains a central issue for both the undergraduate and graduate programs and also affects student perceptions of the quality and access in their education. Therefore, It should also be noted that in general, advising of undergraduate <u>and</u> graduate students have increased because of the expectation now that-major advisors do not just do major advising, but also general education advising, which has been part of the push towards "whole-person" advising at SSU. Political Science and MPA advising involves not only guidance on course selection with majors, but also on complicated issues like study abroad; what courses will count as transfers; and other issues compounded at the graduate level given the age and stage of the traditional graduate student population. Generally, for graduate students returning to University, an Advisor serves as the first stop when any question regarding SSU occurs to a student. The pandemic introduced even more delicate advising issues related to finding course equivalents as graduate offerings were limited, and as other pressures mounted for graduate students who tend to have additional responsibilities over and above those of undergraduates In addition, this shift in advising has increased paperwork requirements for us all as program advisors. Advisors are asked to sign off on university forms in which they have no specialized knowledge. For instance, advisors are asked to sign forms on overload requirements on school of extended learning; or asked to sign off on forms related to general education (not major) coursework substitutions. Where possible, the administration should streamline these processes so that advisors focus more on major-specific issues and sign fewer forms related to general university policies. This additional burden is especially acute for department Chairs and Program Coordinators.

A second way in which the increase in ratio of students to tenure track faculty affects the program is in increasing bottlenecks in required courses within the MPA program. This

can affect time-to-degree and adds additional uncertainty as graduate students balance work-life pressures, pandemic spillovers, and seek to gain a quality education with uneven course offerings and expectations. The overall effect is resulting poor outcomes for the Culminating Experience and delays graduation for some of our students. This is a resource question for the department as we seek to meet the demand for the graduate program in the midst of undergraduate program pressures.

Data Summary of MPA Under Academic Program Review, SSU Institutional Research

Figure 5. below contains information on "Student Characteristics" as provided by SSU-IR through Fall 2022.

Figure 5. MPA Student Characteristics

Fall 2022 Student Characteristics
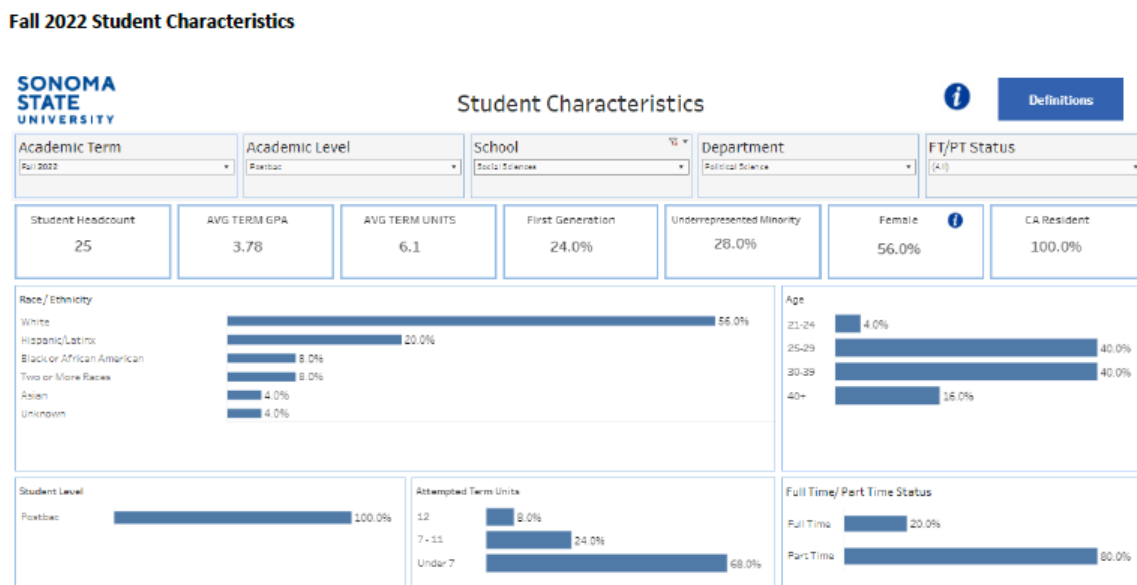
From **Figure 5.**, it is clear that the MPA program has a mean average of just over 6 units per semester for our students. Given that the CSU / University fee schedule changes at 7 units or more, this makes financial sense for our students. This translates to 80% of the students in the term presented as in "part-time" status. Moreover, the program has more female than male students – an attribute consistent over time for the MPA program overall.

Recent trends of Under-Represented Minority (URM) students are reported in **Figure 6.** below.

Figure 6. MPA URM Trends, Fall 2018 – Fall 2022
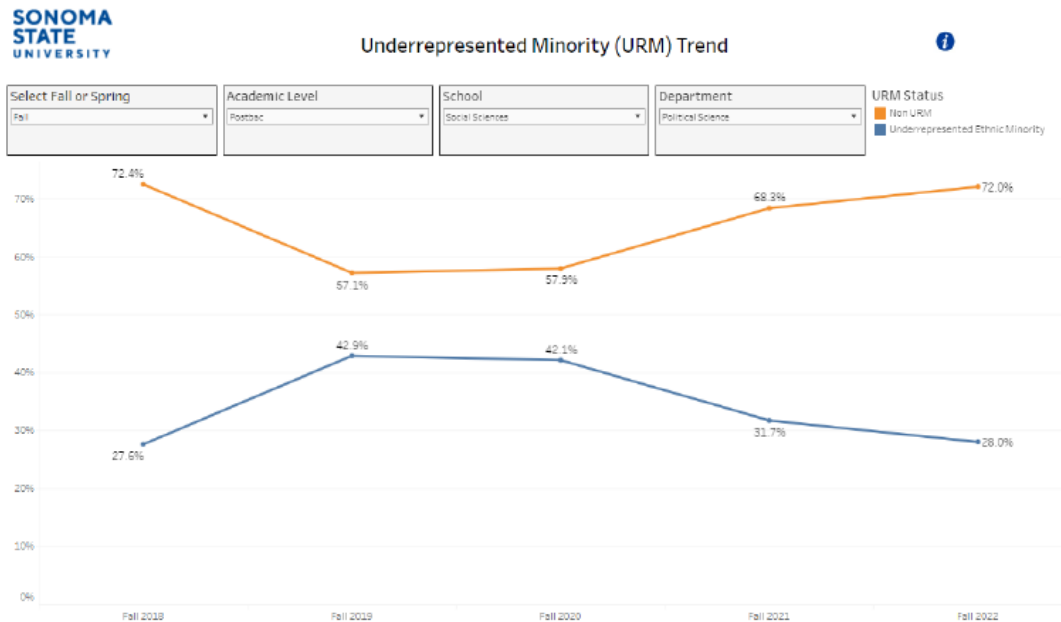
From the trendlines in **Figure 6.**, we can see that the URM trend for MPA over the period provided (Fall 2018 – Fall 2022), notes a dramatic rise in the number of Under-Represented Minority students enrolled. This has declined as overall SSU enrollment has also dropped off. However, with nearly 30% of MPA students classified as URM, this graduate program remains one of the strongest draws for URM students at SSU for graduate training. This remains a core strength of our program and one that we seek to enhance even further. Providing a strong graduate degree that is accessible, affordable, and of improved quality could provide such opportunities moving forward.

Figure 7. MPA Majors, Degrees, Students, & Summary Data

Majors by Department

School	Department	Plan	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
SOCIAL SCIENCES	Political Science	PADM-MPA	39	40	40	39	29	35	38	41	25

Note: hover on school or department column heading and click on [+ or -] to expand or collapse academic plan

Degrees Completed

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Public Administration (MPA) Masters Degrees	11	11	5	7	11	10	5	6	5

New Students

Applicants, Admits, Deposits and Enrollments by School and Major
To expand school by major, hover your cursor over the column titled "School" and click on the "+" icon to its right.

School	Career		Fall 17	Fall 18	Fall 19	Fall 20	Fall 21	Fall 22	Fall 23
SOCIAL SCIENCES	PBAC	Applicants	17.00	9.00	22.00	10.00	20.00	5.00	3.00
		Admitted	13.00	9.00	18.00	7.00	9.00	2.00	3.00
		Deposited	10.00	5.00	12.00	6.00	8.00	1.00	0.00
		Enrolled	9.00	5.00	12.00	6.00	7.00		

FTES at Census, FTEF, SFR (Student Faculty Ratio)

Measure	F 15	F 16	F 17	F 18	F 19	F 20	F 21	F 22
Census FTES	20.3	25.8	17.3	17.8	16.5	21.5	20.3	11.0
FTEF	1.1	2.2	1.6	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.5	1.3
SFR	18.8	12.0	10.7	11.8	15.0	13.9	13.3	8.2

Source: F 15 – F22 from Course Section Reports - Academic Budget & Planning

The summary data of **Figure 7.** provide an overall assessment of the MPA program. This data, from SSU-IR and provided similarly for all programs going through review, does not comport with what is reported by the SSU Graduate Studies Office (GSO), or with the records of the program itself. For example, the number of students served in the top row (Fall 2014 to Fall 2022) does not include students who have moved into a status in the Culminating Experience and have enrolled in Extended Education to finish their respective Capstone or Thesis. There are additional students not accounted for who are on educational leave, have not enrolled for various reasons (family, work, and/or pandemic-related rationales) and still have an active seven-year time limit to degree clock ticking in the program.

Lastly, the Graduate Coordinator (Dr. McCuan) is working with SSU-IR to improve the assessment potential new students via the "Applicants, Admits, Deposits and Enrollments" metric in order to better assess interest and alignment of potential students with yield.

Discussion of Data Summary, POLS, MPA, SFR, and Program Resources

Several other observations are salient with respect to the MPA program and some if not all other graduate programs at SSU. First, there is insufficient consideration for the different Student/Faculty Ratios (SFRs) associated with graduate versus undergraduate programs

when allocating resources to departments that have both undergraduate and graduate programs. SFR statistics are aggregated when a department has both. This has received more consideration with one previous Dean, Dr. Wingard, yet his leadership has ended in the School. The current Dean also recognizes these differences driven by enrollment challenges with the broader University and with the MPA program being placed on hiatus.

Overall, however, this SFR issue can lead to an administrative interpretation that departments don't need additional faculty to teach graduate courses because their aggregate SFR is low. The outcome of this is that it is hard for departments to offer a course schedule that allows graduate students to complete their degrees in a reasonable timeframe. This situation also has resulted in resentment on the part of some faculty that the administration considers it the duty of faculty to teach large undergraduate sections in order to permit smaller graduate sections, while at the same time maintaining that faculty are being "gifted" with small graduate sections. Discussions of quality and creating true graduate seminars fall to the wayside as making target becomes the emphasis.

The level of staff support to graduate program in the School of Social Sciences is another area of concern. There are less than two support staff (one serving less than quarter-time; one full-time) serving the needs of three departments (Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology) and one additional program (Human Development), with a total of seven degree-granting programs. Previously, there were two full-time support staff serving these programs with three departments having both graduate and undergraduate programs as well as Human Development. The result is that POLS faculty and other faculty end up performing substantial clerical and general office work because the available office staff is stretched hopelessly thin. Our staff are stellar – yet cannot keep up with the demands of even a smaller subset of departments and programs. This is not a good use of faculty expertise nor of staff time and is particularly burdensome in the case of the MPA since the work falls basically on the last non-retired faulty member standing – the program Coordinator. Notably, there isn't even a campus job description for "graduate program Coordinator." In practice, this faculty member simply becomes all things to all people. On-going discussions at the faculty governance level also have deliberated about these developments but with little resolution despite consistently growing demands. There are two items attached to the APPENDIX to include a broader, University-wide "graduate coordinator" description of job duties as well as an internal description of duties for the MPA Coordinator.

Costs of Operating the Program

Graduate education at SSU appears to be a lower priority in the budgeting cycle at SSU. As alluded to earlier in this report, faculty positions and funds to hire Lecturers allocated to schools and departments are based on an SFR formula and historical precedence that insufficiently distinguishes between graduate and undergraduate classes. This despite the fact that graduate students pay at least 15 to 18 percent more (aka, the "graduate student

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fee differential") and on average take less units per semester than undergraduates.4 Moreover, assessing the "true costs" of graduate education at SSU relative to what dollars are brought in by students, costs of instruction, and a baseline assessment of overall graduate program health is variable and without transparency. This lack of data and ability to determine the true nature of the costs and benefits of graduate program fees remains an elusive target of discussion at SSU. For example, campus-based fees have risen more than 50% from AY 2013-2014 to 2023-2024 with most of those mandatory fees overwhelmingly geared towards undergraduate programs and support.5

In theory, larger undergraduate sections subsidize smaller sections for majors and graduate students. Any current or future growth in lower division undergraduate enrollment is squeezing resources available to support both upper division majors and graduate programs. Throughout the university there appears to be a lack of appreciation of the fact that quality graduate programs often cost more than undergraduate GE and major courses.

It is not clear, however, just how costly the MPA Program is compared to the average cost of undergraduate programs. Data are not organized and reported in a way that allows this determination. Data are not routinely used to plan for efficiencies. Over the last decade, many MPA classes were large for the graduate level (15+ students plus) and would thus seem to yield respectable SFRs. Courses in the Non-Profit tract routinely are smaller, however. Data recorded in the MPA's 2009 external review indicated that the SFR of MPA courses were only 7.5 percent lower than upper division POLS undergraduate courses.

Historically the issue of lower SFR in the MPA program was accommodated by using salary savings from POLS faculty on release assignments, sabbaticals, etc., and funds provided to POLS from an agreement the program previously had with the California Institute on Human Services (CIHS). These sources have since disappeared upon the termination of the agreement with CIHS when SSU closed the Institute. SSU now funds faculty replacement costs on a fixed basis at $2394 (AY 2023-2024), up from $2087 (AY 2017-2018) per unit in the School of Social Sciences rather the actual cost of replacement faculty. This per unit replacement funding increase is just less than 15% over seven Academic Years.

In the final analysis, it is very difficult to get a handle on the real versus perceived cost of graduate education in the case of the MPA and perhaps all SSU graduate programs. Revenue and expenditure data simply are not maintained in a format that allows disaggregating graduate program from undergraduate program costs. The budget tracking

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[4] For SSU fees and tuition information, see: https://seawolfservices.sonoma.edu/fees and also see: https://seawolfservices.sonoma.edu/student-chargesfees/fees-current-past/2023-24-student-chargesfees
[5] See, for comparison, here: https://seawolfservices.sonoma.edu/fees/2013-14 and here: https://seawolfservices.sonoma.edu/student-chargesfees/fees-current-past/2023-24-student-chargesfees

that exists is a muddle of position control information on tenure/tenure track faculty, separate position control data on FERP faculty, and a fixed amount ($2394 per unit) for Lecturers independent of their actual cost.[6] Operating Expense funds are miserly. There is a general sense among most interviewed faculty that other CSU campuses manage their finances in ways that are much more supportive of graduate education.

Program Quality

There are approximately 300 MPA programs in the U.S., with about one half accredited by NASPAA. There are six MPA programs on CSU campuses in northern California and three are accredited. SSU's MPA program is not one of them. On campus, the MPA program is the only one of the five largest MA programs on campus that is not certified.

An external review of the program was completed in May 2009 using NASPAA standards. The following are selected excerpts from the external reviewer's report:
- "The curriculum design is consistent with NASPAA expectations with respect to the total unit requirement for the MPA degree and the courses that comprise the common curriculum and additional curriculum (concentration) components. The nonprofit administration concentration provides a significant and unique focus on the increasingly important role that nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations have in delivering public services and influencing public policy."
- "The question is whether there is a sufficient faulty nucleus to sustain the MPA program." "This is not a temporary situation. Given foreseeable resources, the program will not have sufficient permanent faculty committed to the MPA program for several years."
- " . . . the program, department, school, and university were unable to comply with my requests for tables and graphs that would assist with the review and, indeed, are essential for the administration of an academic program. "
- "The MPA program faces a crisis with respect to having sufficient permanent faculty to sustain, much less further develop, the MPA program. There seem to be three stark choices: 1) Let the program languish with the current inadequate faculty allocation—essentially a program delivered by contracted practitioners as temporary faculty. 2) Assign faculty from political science or other departments or allocate new faculty positions to the MPA program . . . 3) Suspend the MPA program—possibly leading to its dissolution."
- "There is a strong need and sound purpose for the MPA program. But it requires the commitment and support of the university administration and faculty. If this priority were established, and I suggest evidenced by establishing a goal of accreditation, I believe that SSU could be recognized as having a strong and

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[6] This observation is not meant as a criticism of the School of Social Sciences. The way funds are allocated to Schools at SSU by the university is not predictable enough to make detailed analyses of revenue and expenses of much value.

significant role in addressing the public service and public policy problems of California."

While students have routinely filled out faculty/course evaluations at the end of each course and often at the end of program evaluations, this data is not systematically reviewed among faculty for the purpose of planning program improvements. Nevertheless, anecdotal information collected by the reviewers in classes taught across the past five years indicates a high level of student satisfaction with the program, if frustration with timeliness to degree.

MPA Program's Importance to the Community

Again, the reviewers have not seen any data on the importance of the program to local community agencies. This dearth of information is not surprising since no resources have been allocated to this task. There is, however, clear anecdotal evidence that the program is having an impact on the local community, since almost all of its former graduates are employed in local government or non-profit organizations, and there is a long history of this being the case. Program graduates populate agencies across Sonoma, Marin, Lake, Napa, and Mendocino counties.

In Sonoma County 5.8 percent of employees work in Public Administration with 28 percent of these individuals over age 55. Health care and social assistance are major employment categories in the county and large numbers of employees in these sectors are expected to soon retire. In addition, there are 3,447 nonprofit/tax exempt organizations in Sonoma County, many of which are led by older stage boomer-age managers. There is a dire need for reasonably priced training for nonprofit managers and public administration department managers and leaders alike. .

In addition, there are other factors that are likely to result in increased community demand for the MPA program. The relatively high cost of living in Sonoma County discourages those from other areas moving here to take jobs. Professional graduate student demand typically goes up in recessions. Government jobs that used to be viewed as uninspiring and poorly paid are now being seen more favorably due to their stability and benefits. Demand for re-training among those with business backgrounds, including younger retirees, find the mission-based causes of nonprofits appealing. These considerations would clearly suggest increased future demand for SSU's MPA program.

As the most populous state in the union and the world's fifth largest economy, California's governance relies on trained policy professionals who understand the methods and practice of public administration and are imbued with a commitment to public service. Particularly in a time of constrained, difficult budget decisions, California relies on its leaders and policymakers— the majority of whom were trained at the CSU. Seven hundred people, or 64 percent of Californians with Master's degrees awarded in Public Administration in 2007, studied at the CSU (see https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/alumni/made-in-the-csu/Pages/public-service.aspx).

Methodology

The approach followed in creating this report relied on a subjective analysis of a range of information supplied by those knowledgeable about the program and graduate education at SSU. First, a series of meetings were held with primary university stakeholders to identify a set of future options for leading SSU's MPA program, to determine criteria for evaluating the options, and to compare each option with these criteria. The following people were interviewed:

- Dr. John Wingard, former Dean of the School of Social Sciences
- Dr. Elaine Leeder, former Dean of the School of Social Sciences
- Dr. Emily Ray, Associate Professor of Political Science and former Coordinator of the MPA Program
- Dr. Robert McNamara, former Chair of the Political Science Department
- Dr. Catherine Nelson, Retired, former Chair of the Political Science Department and former Coordinator of the MPA Program
- Dr. Andy Merrifield, Retired, Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Margaret Purser, Retired, Professor of Anthropology and former Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee
- Ms. Diane Brown, Lecturer in the MPA Program and former Coordinator of the MPA Program, as well as long-time contributor to the program
- Don Schwartz, Lecturer in the MPA Program
- Andrew Sturmfels, Lecturer in the MPA Program
- Judith Kunofsky, Retired, former Lecturer in the MPA Program
- Aaron Zavala, City of Petaluma, Senior Management Analyst, SSU POLS BA Alum
- Ezrah Chabaan, Chief of Staff, State Senator Bill Dodd, SSU CCJS BA Alum
- Chris Rogers, former Mayor, City of Santa Rosa, MPA Graduate
- Lisa Badenfort, CEO, North Bay Realtors Association, MPA Graduate
- Aleena Decker, Communications Coordinator, EDB-Sonoma County, MPA Graduate
- Ethan Brown, Executive Director, EDB of Sonoma County, SSU POLS BA Alum
- Kirstyne Lange, Founding Board Member, Sonoma County IOLERO, MPA Graduate
- Mary Watts, Policy Branch Chief, LIHWAP, HHS, MPA Graduate
- Peter Rumble, CEO, Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce
- Dave Guhin, City Manager, City of Sonoma; former Asst. City Manager, Santa Rosa
- Dr. David Sul, Lecturer in the MPA Program and former Coordinator of the MPA Program,
- Norma Martinez-Rubin, Lecturer in the MPA Program and former Coordinator of the MPA Program,
- Mr. Jason Lau, former Interim Associate Dean, School of Extended and International Education

- Mr. Robert Rosen, Retired, former Director of Business and Operations for the School of Extended Education
- Ms. Karen Leitsch, former Administrative Manager, School of Social Sciences
- Dr. Mark Merickel, Retired, former Dean of the School of Extended Education
- Dr. Robert Eyler, former Dean, School of Extended and International Education

An overarching set of core questions was developed for use in these interviews. These core questions were modified as appropriate in the case of each person being interviewed. Some people were not asked some questions, because it was not felt that they would have knowledge regarding the topic. The questions were changed slightly from person to person depending on their relationship with the MPA program.

Second, a number of documents were reviewed to follow up on information provided by those interviewed. These documents can be provided as requested.

Third, based on the information supplied by the interviewees and the documents reviewed, a set of optional approaches for administering the MPA program were determined:

Program Options Considered

- **Option #1. No Change**. Keep the program as is with Dr. McCuan remaining as Coordinator.
- **Option #2. Hire a New Faculty Leader, Coordinator**. Keep the program as is with a new tenure- track faculty member hired to lead it.
- **Option #3. Temporarily Employ a Qualified Lecturer to Lead the Program Pending a New Faculty Hire.**
- **Option #4. Discontinue the MPA Program.**
- **Option #5. Discontinue the Program and Replace it with a New MPA Program in School of Extended Education.**
- **Option #6. Discontinue the Program and Facilitate the Continued Availability of MPA Program to Service Area via Another Institution of Higher Education.**
- **Option #7. Revise the MPA Program.** Propose revamp of the curriculum and extensive re-purposing of the traditional MPA program including new Program Learning Objectives (PLOs). .

Fourth, also based on the interviews and documents reviewed, a set of **decision criteria** was developed for evaluating the "goodness" of the seven options for the future administration of the program. These criteria are as follows:

- **Quality of Program Faculty and Faculty Leadership Afforded;**
- **Continued Availability of MPA Program for Local Students in the Service Area;**
- **Responsiveness to Community Needs;**

- **Cost Efficiency for the School of Social Sciences (SSS) and Political Science Department (POLS);**
- **Acceptability to POLS Faculty and the Department Vision.**

Finally, this Program Review report was prepared and offers seven recommendations, one of which addresses the issue of a future program, personnel, and leadership. These seven recommendations were shared with the individuals who interviewed. Each interviewee was asked to read the draft Options and provide reactions and feedback to this Reviewer prior to the preparation of this final Program Review. Of the people who were originally interviewed, all provided reactions and suggestions, and their ideas were carefully considered when preparing the final Report. That said, it is important that readers recognize that the content and recommendations in this report reflect the opinions of the reviewer and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts and feelings of all of those who agreed to be interviewed.

SWOT Analysis of the MPA Program

SWOT stands for: **S**trength, **W**eakness, **O**pportunity, **T**hreat. A **SWOT Analysis** guides identification of a program's or organization's Strengths and Weaknesses (**S-W**), as well as broader Opportunities and Threats (**O-T).** Developing a fuller awareness of the situational or operating environment can assist with both program planning, review, and decision-making.

The **SWOT** method was originally developed for business and industry, yet it is equally useful in the work of policy planning, community health and development, and for education.

SWOT is not the only assessment technique one can use. The SWOT analysis can be compared with other assessment tools in what is often referenced as a "Community Tool Box" to determine the strongest approach for the analytical situation. The strengths of a **SWOT Analysis** are the simplicity and application of this method to a variety of levels of operations and programs.

A SWOT analysis can offer helpful perspectives at any stage of a review effort. We teach students in our program that one can use this technique to:

- Explore possibilities for new efforts or solutions to identified problems;
- Make decisions about the best path for an initiative or for change;
- Identifying opportunities for success in the context of threats to success and to clarify directions and choices;
- Determine where change is possible. For example if a program is at a juncture or turning point (such as "hiatus), an inventory of strengths and weaknesses can reveal priorities as well as possibilities;

- The technique can be used to adjust and refine plans mid-course. A new opportunity might open wider avenues, while a new threat could close a path that once existed.

SWOT also offers a simple way of communicating about your initiative or program and is an excellent tool to simply organize information gathered from various inputs.

A strength of the **SWOT Analysis** is that links are made among internal and external elements of the environment into a comprehensive summary of the situation confronting an entity like the MPA program. The **SWOT Analysis** can be a part of a continuous planning and Program Review process that analyzes our program's internal resources and capabilities and external demands. Components of the **SWOT Analysis** include:

Strengths: factors inside a program that distinguish it from rivals or which contribute to making a program more effective (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013). On one level, strengths can reside in the MPA degree offerings. However, given the reality that programs can often be easily or effectively imitated or substituted, the review process should look deeper for organizational strengths, such as resources (which may be tangible or intangible), and competencies or capabilities (which can include types of courses offered, emphasis on practical training skills, professional practices and systems, and the culture). Our MPA program's work on designing a curriculum that mimics that of a national accrediting body (such as NASPAA) can build on the notion of "distinctiveness" and form a basis for our description of strengths.

Weaknesses: factors inside a program or organization that prevent the entity under study from achieving its objectives and that limit performance (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013). Weaknesses can be also be seen by the absence of critical resources or competencies required to compete with rivals and/or grow programs.

Opportunities: elements in the external environment that signal the possibility for improving the positioning of an organization (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013). Rather than being potential actions where an organization can engage, opportunities are better seen as objective elements of the environment outside of the organization. Examples include a "trend, change, or overlooked need that supports the demand for a product or service or program" (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013: 206-207).

Threats: These factors are elements outside of the organization in the external environment that work against the organization or program and that pose challenges for performance (Bensoussan & Fleisher, 2013).[7]

Using the technique of a **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) matrix, we can assess each element of the matrix listed above in light of **Options** given the

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[7]Bensoussan, Babette and Craig Fisher. 2013. *Analysis Without Paralysis: 12 Tools to Make Better Strategic Decisions.* 2nd Edition. Pearson Education, Inc. Publishing as FT Press.

Pros and **Cons** of each approach.   The **SWOT Analysis** allows us to determine ways in which MPA and SSU as well as our external environment have changed since the last Program Review.

SSU MPA SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Long academic standing at SSU; Hundreds of graduates; Strong departmental support; Diverse enrolled students; Dedicated, enthusiastic alumni & community friends of the program	Loss of personnel; Difficulty to change curriculum; Heavy reliance on Adjunct practitioners despite uncertainty Current financial weakness of SSU Soft dollars diminishing in AA
Opportunities	Threats
Stable leadership commitment Re-engaging community Increased time-to-degree Rich job opportunities & career landscape in the near- and longer-term future in the SSU service area Employer demands met by skills	Potential competitors Increasingly online programs Loss of institutional support Deeper resource constraints Declining state support Changing expectations of students as consumers of higher education

Assessment of Options for MPA's Future MPA at SSU

Based on interviews, the SWOT Analysis, and documents reviewed a set of seven options seem possible. There are pros and cons associated with each option. These considerations are explained below followed by a summary chart that attempts to quantify the relative "goodness of fit" associated with each option.

- **Option #1. No Change. Keep the program as is with Dr. McCuan remaining as Coordinator.**

   Pros:
   Both Dr. McCuan (2003) and Dr. Ray (2015) were hired to coordinate and lead the MPA program amidst constrained resources. Each is respected in the POLS

Department and throughout the School of Social Sciences. The initial idea considered is to continue one (Dr. McCuan) in this role. This continuation would assure the continued presence of a program that is responsive to community interests and its operation in the current low-cost manner.

Cons:
The obvious weakness of this option is that Dr. McCuan has other competing professional interests that are also of value, perhaps greater value to the POLS Department. His assignment as graduate program Coordinator may not be in his best career interest or in the best interests of the Department or School.

A committed Coordinator, who is identified with the subject matter and teaches classes on a regular basis should form the core of a graduate program.

Option #2. Hire a New Faculty Leader.

Pros:
The POLS permanent faculty teaching in the MPA program is down 1.5 FTF due to the retirements of Drs. Nelson, Parness, Merrifield, Kramer, Dixon, Ziblatt, and Apolloni. There appears to be considerable agreement among POLS faculty that the next new faculty hire should be someone with credentials in Public Administration and American Government who would become the next Coordinator of the MPA program. Making the right hire would give the program new life and sustainability. It would send a message to community, students, and faculty that SSU values the program.

Cons:
- There are no plans to hire a new POLS faculty in 2023-2024 and perhaps not for a number of years. As the external reviewer stated, "The relative priority of graduate program education at SSU, particularly the MPA program, is nebulous at best."

- **Option #3. Temporarily Employ a Highly Qualified Lecturer to Lead the Program Pending a New Faculty Hire.**

Pros:
There is one highly qualified Lecturer who could be hired on a part time basis to coordinate the program until a new faculty member with appropriate qualifications is hired. Diane Brown was previously the MPA Coordinator, has taught courses, and provided leadership to the program for over 20 years. She is particularly knowledgeable about the administration of non-profit organizations and she is highly committed to the long-term success of the program. Everyone involved who knows Ms. Brown feels confident that, with appropriate support, she would do a good job as Coordinator for some period of time. – yet there may be a window that closes here over the next two or three years. One positive outcome of this

arrangement would be development of a detailed job description of the MPA Coordinator, which could have the added benefit of providing a model for other graduate Coordinatorships at SSU and the on-going work of the Graduate Studies Subcommittee (GSS) and the Graduate Studies Office (GSO).

Cons:
The weaknesses of this approach include Ms. Brown's limited background in the area of public administration versus non-profits, and the danger to the program of operating with a non-tenure track person in leadership given the current budget problem facing SSU. Splitting the Coordinator duties between Ms. Brown and Dr. McCuan, with Dr. McCuan representing the program on the Council of Department Chairs (CDC) and Graduate Studies Subcommittee (GSS), where resource allocations and curricular / program issues are discussed and providing assistance to Ms. Brown in hiring Lecturers to teach PA courses could mitigate these weaknesses.

- **Option #4. Discontinue the Program and do not replace the MPA degree.**

    Pros:
    Once accomplished, this would entirely eliminate the cost of offering the program and possibly free up scarce professorial resources for instructing undergraduate students.

    Cons:
    Closing the program would be a harsh blow to the community, verifying suspicions that SSU is not committed to graduate education.

    As there are no true cost/revenue data available, it is unknown how much, if any, money would be saved by discontinuing the program. Presently, much of the work is done on overload by tenured or FERPed faculty and by Lecturers who are relatively inexpensive. Any real "savings" stemming for discontinuing the MPA program almost certainly would not be reallocated within the department or school but would simply disappear to other university priorities.

    The School of Social Sciences would need to continue offering the program for the time it will take already accepted students to complete their studies. In the short run, this likely would reduce SFR in the program making it even more expensive. Moreover, the process of discontinuing a program is cumbersome and drawn out. It likely would take at least two academic years to effectuate closure, probably longer.

    Finally, elimination of the program is entirely inconsistent with SSU's mission that states:

    > "The University offers selected professional and graduate
    > programs leading to master's degrees, teaching

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credentials, and certificates in various career fields. These programs respond to regional and state needs within the academic, business, education, and professional communities."

And closing the program would be inconsistent with the mission of the CSU:

"To prepare significant numbers of educated, responsible people to contribute to California's schools, economy, culture, and future."

Closing the program would rob future students and the community of a valuable public resource -- a moderately priced professional training program for people working in service-oriented public and non-profit professions. The MPA program has been a primary source for training public service leaders for decades as is quite evident to anyone who checks in to the backgrounds of community leaders in Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Lake and Mendocino counties.

- **Option #5. Discontinue the Program and Replace it with an MPA Program in School of Extended and International Education (SEIE).**

  Pros:
  The discontinuation of an academic program is an entirely reasonable response to severely reduced resources available to the university. The Chancellor's Office has established procedures for campuses to use in developing local discontinuance procedures, and SSU has a policy on this matter. So, there is a road map that can be followed to close the program.

  SSU's School of Extended and International Education (SEIE) has demonstrated ability in offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs and has established a strategic goal to "Collaborate with academic partners to increase graduate programs running through SEIE by 10% . . ." SEIE sees academic programs as being a big part of its future and would welcome the opportunity to establish an MPA program.

  SEIE possesses a number of key attributes: (1) sound financial support since program needs can be priced into tuition and fees charged students with these charges adjusted over time as necessary; (2) infrastructure in areas such as business services, marketing, human resources, and technology; (3) support for faculty in developing new curricula; (4) opportunities for valuable adjunct faculty to retain an affiliation with the university; (5) options for underpaid regular faculty to earn extra income; (6) curricular control by academic departments (according to SEIE); (7) the award of valid SSU degrees to graduates upon program completion; and (8) SEIE has had some success in operating a hybrid online-classroom based program (e.g., the

Hutchins BA Degree Completion Program) that could be very appealing to some students.

Cons:
The overall process of closing out a state-side graduate program and creating a replacement in SEIE requires extensive planning and would possibly take three full years to complete. As part of this process, SSU would need to weigh such matters as the relevance of the MPA program to SSU's mission and strategic plan, the effects of the closure on current and prospective students, the local and regional demand for graduates of the program, and the estimated financial ramifications of discontinuation, short term and long term. The mere fact that the matter is under consideration would have a chilling effect on enrollment. Moreover, once a decision is made to close a program it is the duty of the university to allow all existing students an opportunity to finish. This would require student specific plans across two academic years. Enrollment in these classes, particularly in the second year, would be very low and thus costly for the university. Aside from difficulty of closing, there is probably nothing more detrimental to an academic institution's reputation than program closure.

The matter of recreating a discontinued stateside graduate program in EE also poses problems. First, Executive Order 1047 (2010) prohibits simply moving an on-campus program to Extended Education so the existing MPA would need to phase out before its replication in SEIE.[8],[9] Second, SEIE would need to analyze the viability of creating an MPA under its auspices. From SEIE's perspective the main factors here are is there a critical mass of students who will want to enroll in the program (probably yes), will they be able to afford the program under the cost structure employed by SEIE (maybe yes), and is there a faculty champion backing it (no).

The only graduate program known to the interviewees that has made the transition from state support to SEIE is the Master's Degree in Organizational Development. Its academic anchor school also shifted from Social Sciences to Hutchins in the transition process so it does not provide a true corollary for the MPA program. The only experience SEIE has in migrating a state supported program (actually in replicating as state supported program) is the relatively new Solano/Napa Liberal Arts Degree Program that is a spin-off of the long-standing similar program based in Ukiah. Critics point out that the new program is much more expensive than the long-standing state supported one in Ukiah.

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[8] See CSU E.O. 1047 (2010) and CSU Academic Senate resolution (2013) both here: https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/academic-senate/resolutions/2012-2013/3124.pdf
[9] For a gateway to all CSU "Academic Policies," see: https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/administration/academic-and-student-affairs/academic-programs-innovations-and-faculty-development/Pages/academic-policies.aspx

The cost to students of a MPA degree through SEIE would likely be higher than the program now offered by the state and this could reduce student demand. Existing SEIE graduate program costs range from $560 a unit (Spanish) to $1850 per unit (Executive MBA). The MPA program likely would be more in line with SEIE's "Non-Profit Management Certificate" program that costs $900 per unit. The per semester charge for taking eight or more units in the stateside MPA program is $4812. Yet, almost all students in the program work full time, most take eight or fewer units a semester. At eight units a semester the per unit state side cost is $602 per unit, about $300 less a unit than SEIE. However, students taking six or fewer units in a semester pay $3306 on the stateside. This means that students who take six units pay $551 for stateside courses, would have a much more sizeable cost increase if they take less than 8 units. Bottom line, it would cost students substantially more if the MPA were offered through SEIE, but this would depend on the number of units a student enrolls in per semester. For a 36-unit graduate program, minimal total unit cost would be over $32,000, while the current MPA program of 40 units (plus up to three electives, 4 units each, to total possibly 52 total units), would see an overall program cost soar to $45,000 or more.[10]

Part of the reason for SEIE's high cost is that A&F currently requires 22 to 26 percent of SEIE revenue per course for administering SEIE's business services. SEIE also has paid additional fees to cover a portion of the debt service for the Green Music Center. While their use to be an advantage to Schools of offering classes through SEIE, an 80 percent to 20 percent SEIE-to-School profit split, this no longer is true. In fact, new requirements from the Chancellor's Office and SSU's A&F Division now disallow direct payments from excess revenue from SEIE coursework to academic schools. So, there is no economic advantage in terms of enhanced revenue for schools in moving graduate programs to SEIE. While SEIE has worked to build all costs into its course fees, including charge-backs from academic schools for specific services, there really is no certainty that this revenue to Schools will or can continue in the future given reorganization and the move of Summer School, for example, into stateside of the University. If there is one thing that has proven certain at SSU, charge-backs to Schools from A&F likely will increase over time and revenue to Schools and departments will be held at the lowest level required to deliver SFR targets.

It is not, therefore, clear whether there would be sufficient student demand to operate the MPA program at the price SEIE would need to charge, and the most important factor for the success of an SEIE program is critical mass, i.e., enough students to make it financially viable. SEIE would likely need to use a cohort model and this format was not successful when tried by the University of San Francisco in Sonoma County. In fact, there was considerable drop-off in enrollment across years in SEIE's existing cohort model graduate program, the MA in Depth Psychology.

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[10] The cost breakdown here is for 40 graduate units by $900/unit plus up to three, 4-unit undergraduate courses at approximately $750/unit to total about $45,000.

In addition, many SSU employees enroll in the MPA under the University's fee-waiver plan. This plan does not extend to SEIE, so these individuals would have to pay the full cost of their education.

Finally, most POLS faculty likely would strongly oppose "transitioning" the program to SEIE as an equity issue. We would consider this privatizing the program in a way that limits student access and reduces or eliminates faculty control of the program's academic content. This attitudinal barrier would be challenging to overcome. Also, the faculty union likely would fight the move. Existing CSU CO memos on permanent program changes and the CFA's position would be that such a transition moves tenured jobs to contract and/or temporary positions – a prohibition likely to be grieved under Sections 2., 12., and 38. of the CBA.

- **Option #6. Discontinue the Program but Assure Continued Access to an MPA to Local Students via a Cooperative Agreement with Another Institution of Higher Education.**

  Pros:
  Depending on the nature of the agreement, this could reduce the cost of the program to SSU while still assuring a quality program to locals. There are other universities, including San Francisco State University, the University of San Francisco, Golden Gate University, and Sacramento State University with MPA-type programs that could welcome an opportunity to serve the student population now attending SSU. The difficulty is that none of these programs are local after the USF campus left Santa Rosa almost ten years ago. SFSU and Sacramento State require long, expensive commutes. Another alternative would be the numerous IHEs that offer online MPA degrees including the University of Phoenix, Walden University, the University of Southern California, Northwestern University, and Capella University.

  Cons:
  While in theory this option might sound good, SSU does not have experience in collaboratively working with other IHE's to offer graduate programs. Indeed, there is very little such activity in the overall CSU. Campuses seem to work as silos, often protecting turf. In fact, there have been turf battles between SSU's MPA program and that offered by San Francisco State University regarding Marin County students. Aside from the now defunct Ed.D. program between SSU's School of Education and UC Davis, there just remain a dearth of cooperative ventures between SSU and another four-year or Master's Degree granting institution. Indeed, the U.C. Davis – SSU Ed.D. program existed because it was a Chancellor's Office initiative.

  If one accepts SSU's self-pronouncement that its mission is to offer, "selected professional and graduate programs leading to master's degrees, teaching credentials, and certificates in various career fields . . . [in response]. to regional

and state needs within the academic, business, education, and professional communities," then SSU's MPA program would appear to be a perfect fit for that mission.
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- **Option #7. Revise and Revitalize the MPA Program.**

  Pros:
  Extensively revamp and re-focus the MPA Curriculum into a new, powerful degree that fulfills the need for public sector, non-profit, and community-based professionals with advanced training in the service area. This new program would be fundamentally different than the past SSU MPA program.

  The creation of an extensively re-crafted curriculum, focused around public policy and management is widely applicable within the service area, can leverage faculty talents and interests across the School and departments, while also fulfilling future needs for multiple sectors of employment across public, private, non-profit, and community-based spaces.

  This revised degree should have Program Goals that prepare innovative leaders for service in public, nonprofit, and community-based organizations while additionally developing the knowledge and skills necessary for effectively managing public, nonprofit, and community-based organizations.

  A new curriculum graduating practitioners focused on service while developing the knowledge and skills noted above can also concentrate on mutual respect, equity, fairness, and transparency issues common to national standards and would enhance connection to associations such as NASPPA or the American Society for Public Administration or NAPA (National Academy of Public Administration)..

  Furthermore, a revamped degree program can generate faculty engagement in research and the dissemination of that research and in broader community and professional service.

  Establishing clearly defined Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) tied to a revised degree and revised curriculum also has the advantage of clear articulation for the program's courses, vision, and connection to the curriculum and the overall strategic goals of Sonoma State's "Strategic Plan 2025" as well as the academic reorganization efforts noted in the SSU Academic Affairs effort of an Academic Master Plan.

  This new program would be re-crafted into a **Master's of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA)** with extensive curricular change as detailed below to include new Program Learning Objectives linked with "High Impact Practices."

Cons:
Given the move of MPA to "hiatus," there is a loss of momentum for admission and branding in the community, with the threat of a perception that the future of the program is not bright, lacking institutional commitment to MPA / MPPA. This perception can be overcome – and one avenue to do so is with the creation of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) in order to build goodwill and connections to the service area and within the community.

Another potential challenge can be the actual delivery of a new curriculum. In the wake of COVID, how students want curricula delivered, how Instructors (especially off-campus practitioners / Adjuncts)

Discussion of Option #7: New Master's in Public Policy and Administration (MPPA)

Despite the lack of national accreditation via a NASPAA-accredited Master's program, the SSU revised MPPA program's curriculum would be tightly coupled to student learning outcomes that comprise [NASPAA's universal required competencies,](#) including:[11]

1. To lead and manage in public governance;
2. To participate in and contribute to the policy process;
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
4. To articulate and apply the public service perspective;
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry;

Following these competencies, a SSU MPPA program has developed specific learning objectives as indicated below.

New Program Learning Objectives PROPOSED for the Revised MPA / MPPA at SSU:

The new SSU Master's of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) program will foster and enhance critical thinking, communication, management, public service and non-profit perspectives, and engagement in the policy process among present and future managers in government, nonprofit, and community organizations. The critical skills learned from this curriculum will ensure that managers in these sectors engage leading in an inclusive and socially responsible manner.

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[11] Broader discussion of the NASPAA standards for student competencies can be found here: https://www.naspaa.org/sites/default/files/docs/2019-11/NASPAA%20Accreditation%20Standards%20-%202019%20FINAL%20with%20rationale.pdf

There are two broad elements to new Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) – one on **Student Engagement and Knowledge**; and a second element on **Applied Student Competencies**. These are discussed below.

PLO Element #1: Student Engagement and Knowledge Upon Graduation:

Goal: To improve Student Engagement with "High Impact Practices" (HIP)[12] by developing student knowledge and tools where MPA graduates are expected to be able to:

1. Meet challenges of a rapidly changing world;

2. Lead and manage in public and non-profit governance, to include:

    a. Applying a wide range of knowledge about the changing nature of public service and management as well as with the non-profit sector and community organizations;
    b. Applying a wide range of knowledge about a specific emphasis in the MPA program to include public service or non-profit management or community organizations;
    c. Evidence professional skills necessary for a successful career in public or non-profit management or community organizations;

3. Participate in and contribute to the public policy-making process;

4. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;

5. Articulate and apply an inclusive perspective about service;

6. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry by:

    a. Writing effectively and concisely for an audience of professionals;
    b. Presenting effectively to small and large groups;
    c. Working effectively in groups and teams;
    d. Demonstrating applied analytical skills

7. Communicate and work to ensure social justice and equity, as highlighted by the Program;

8. Successful students should demonstrate mastery of theoretical concepts with an emphasis on practical application with knowledge of, and commitment to, the highest ethical standards of professional work.

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[12] See Schnequa N. Diggs. "Got HIPs? Making student engagement enhancement a core part of program development with high impact practices." 2022. *Teaching Public Administration* (*Vol. 40(2) 167–180.)*

PLO Element #2: Applied Student Competencies in Core and Emphasis Area (PM or NP):

Goal: Upon completion of coursework in Core and in a program "Emphasis," MPA graduates are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of professional expectations and ethics;

2. Understand the roles and relationships of leaders, officials, citizens and inclusive community stakeholders;

3. Articulate the purposes of and processes for communicating with citizens and community stakeholders;

4. Develop strategies for engaging citizens and community stakeholders;

5. Lead, manage, and serve to provide services and functions in the Emphasis field, through:

6. Application of skills of professional management in areas of financial resources, human resources, and leadership in the Emphasis field;

7. Develop an understanding of the current policy issues and challenges of complex networked relationships and develop skills in collaborative management to provide solutions to these challenges in the Emphasis field.

Qualifications & Comments

The information presented in this Program Review is the work of the reviewer and no interpretations should be made regarding the information that was supplied by those he interviewed. In the end, the reviewer drew their own conclusions.

Recommendations & the New MPPA Plan of Action

Recommendation #1 – Phase 1 to Phase 2
Hire a new tenure track faculty member to lead the MPA program. This individual should have credentials in American Government and Public Administration. Ideally, this new FTEF TT faculty member also would have academic training and work experience in the non-profit sector, yet this is ideal – not a requirement. Dr. McCuan should be asked to remain as Coordinator until transition to a new or existing permanent FTF (Full-Time Faculty member) is hired. This role could continue through Phase 2.

Recommendation #2 – Phase 1 to Phase 3
Provide resources to the program necessary to allow a reasonable schedule of classes that permits students to complete the program in no more than two to two and a half years. Schedule unpredictability and resultant delay in time to degree are considered by some interviewees to be problems for the program. The resources should include staff support to the program and a marketing budget.

Recommendation #3 – Phases 1 and 2
Study and implement measures that increase the cost efficiency of the MPA program. This might include creating a School-wide Graduate Studies Coordinator position, reducing the graduation requirement to 36 units from the current 40 while dropping the prerequisite requirements, utilizing a student cohort model or other approaches for increasing average per class SFR, offering some classes exclusively through Extended Education in intersession and summer sections[13], more accessible advising, and cross listing some courses with other departments. For example, there are at least three Organizational Development courses taught on campus (Business, Sociology, and POLS). Disciplinary cross-pollination would be healthy and could save money. Other cross-listing possibilities include Budgeting (the Master's in Nursing program use to do this with POLS) and Public Finance (with Business), and possibly Public Policy courses taught by affiliated MPA faculty in other Departments (such as GEP, SOC, and/or CCJS). Another consideration might be allowing advanced upper-division students to enroll in selected MPA / MPPA courses with instructor permission. This would have the added benefit of increasing the number of challenging courses available to POLS majors. Other majors could also be encouraged to enroll as well towards creation of a Blended program option.

Recommendation #4 – Phase 2
Engage in a formal survey of former students to determine their perspectives and recommendations for program improvement including the quality of instruction, content, scheduling and program format. Improvements and cost efficiency innovations are best identified in consultation with service recipients: students in this case.

Recommendation #5 – Phases 2 and 3
Establish a Community Advisory Board / Committee. Aggressively outreach to government and non-profit agencies that hire program graduates to create partnerships that enhance the program. These partnerships may involve community outreach, internships, content advisors, Lecturers, guest speakers, and financial contributions. When outside agencies become more involved, they develop a greater stake in the program.

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[13] Under the Education Code, courses cannot be offered in Extended Education if they supplant regular course offerings available through stateside programs during the regular academic year. There are frequent movements in the Chancellor's Office to change this existing policy; yet no moves are expected in this area in the current AY.

A proposed Assessment Plan for these recommendations is presented below.

MPA to MPPA Assessment Plan, 2022-2023 to 2027-2028

MPA Program Outcomes	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
PRE-PHASE 1: _MPA Program Review_ _& Program Re-Design._	Prepare data needs, research top MPA programs, national trends, and CSU MPA, PA, PP programs					
PHASE 1: _Goal 1._ _Program Review &_ _Curricular Revision (Fall)_ _Goal 2._ _External Review &_ _Program Review Through_ _Governance (Spring)_		Engage in both Internal & External Program Review; Propose NEW Program, SSU MPPA				
PHASE 2: _Goal 3._ _Engage program with_ _alumni and other_ _program stakeholders_ _(Fall)._ _Goal 4._ _Create Community_ _Advisory Board,_ _CAB (Spring)._			Design indirect assessment survey of alumni and community stakeholders; implement survey; recruit CAB members			
PHASE 3: _Goal 5. Implement CAB_ _Group & Meetings (Fall)._ _Goal 6. Design_ _"Accelerated MPPA_ _program," to include_ _Blended Program Option_ _(Fall & Spring)._				Blended Program Curriculum Design & CAB Governance Creation		
PHASE 4: _Goal 7. Implement 4+1_ _Blended Program Option_ _(Fall & Spring)._					Design "Special Sessions" plan w/ Community Partners	

PHASE 5: _Prepare new MPPA Program Review & Assessment of Revised Program Changes, Needs, Strengths, and Weaknesses_						Engage in both Internal & External Program Review

Conclusion: An Opportunity for a New Way Forward and a New Degree: The SSU MPPA

This Program Review was prepared with the following tenets as guiding principles:

- The MPA program needs new strategic direction and a revitalized focus for its next iteration in order to meet the changing nature of both the service area environment and students' needs;
- Therefore, any strategic plans should be broad enough to set the general direction of creating a new program, new organizational initiatives, and be specific enough to clearly assist strategic decision- making, implementation, and evaluation at the administrative level;
- Academic strategic planning is a collaborative activity;
- We need to create a program and revitalized curriculum of lasting value.

The SSU MPA degree has a long and respected legacy in the North Bay. Yet enrollment, though relatively steady over the last 20 years of the program and growing throughout the program's life, is in need of revitalization. To grow significantly, the program needs to better reach a wider, changing spectrum of students throughout our community.

This self-study revealed a number of areas that should be addressed. The following questions could guide any external review in examining the issues of most concern to program faculty and staff:

- Does our current curriculum reflect what students need in the 21st century? Are there courses we could omit, or others we could include, to better cover a practical emphasis on policymaking skills combined with training in ethical and professional management and broaden our appeal?
- What issues do the reviewers see in the fact that the program relies so heavily on dedicated practitioner adjunct faculty members?
- Diversity of students has grown and the faculty would like that to continue and expand. What suggestions might the reviewers have for improving the program, attracting a broader range of students, increasing the academic rigor of the program, and increasing the role and support of alumni?
- Do the reviewers know of professional training opportunities that are missed by the proposed curricula?
- What do the reviewers think of the ongoing resource challenges faced by SSU especially in areas of graduate education?

The purpose of this Review is to prioritize goals and objectives so that resources can be devoted to the activities that are of greatest importance to the University. The usefulness of a such a review and planning depends on the extent to which graduate education at SSU: (1) continues to be placed "front and center" in the life of the University; (2) provides guidance for implementation in phases; and (3) allows for assessment of both short- and long-term goals allied with overall University health that can provide a foundation for future planning processes.

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Proposed Revised Curriculum for the "MPPA"
("Master of Public Policy and Administration")

Requires 32 Units of Coursework +
4 Units of Elective Units = 36 Units Overall

Courses subject to revision in RED
Courses in <u>*underlined ITALICS*</u> = High Impact Practices ("HIP")
~~Strikethrough~~ courses are eliminated

Common Core

24 Units Required (Substitutes approved by MPA Coordinator)

- POLS 502   Organizational Theory & Analysis (Spring, 4 units)
- POLS 503   Public Budgeting and Finance (Fall, 2 units)
- POLS 504   Research Writing & Communication in Policy & Community (Fall, 4 units)
- <u>*POLS 505*</u>   <u>*Research Methods for Policy & Administration (Spring, 4 units)*</u>
- POLS 507   Ethics & Leadership in Administration (Fall or Spring, 4 units)
- <u>*POLS 539*</u>   <u>*Program Implementation & POLS 550 Planning and Evaluation (Spring, 4 units) – COMBINE these two courses into one "Program Implementation & Evaluation"*</u>
- <u>*POLS 580*</u>   <u>*Nonprofit Dynamics: Politics and Community Environment & POLS 581 – Nonprofit Governance and Legal Issues) – COMBINE into one (Fall or Spring, 2 units) / Non-Profits, Public Policy, & Society (Fall or Spring, 2 units)*</u>

Public Management (PM) Emphasis Area

Up to 6-8 Units, can include (minimum of 3 courses needed):

- POLS 501   Governance in the Administrative State (4 units)
- <u>*POLS 503A*</u>   <u>*Public Finance – State & Local Budgeting (2 units)*</u>
- POLS 504A   Public Personnel – Managing Human Capital (2 units)
- <u>*POLS 506*</u>   <u>*Public Policy Process & Analysis (Fall, 4 units)*</u>
- ~~POLS 511~~   ~~Labor Relations (2 units)~~
- POLS 538   Administrative Law / Labor Relations (2 units)
- POLS 560   Special Issues in Public Policy & Analysis (2-4 units)

Nonprofit (NP) Emphasis Area

Up to 6-8 Units, can include (minimum of 3 courses needed):

- *POLS 503B   Fiscal Management of Nonprofit Agencies (2 units)*
- POLS 504B   Personnel Administration for Nonprofit Organizations (2 units)
- *POLS 582   Planning and Resource Development for Nonprofit Agencies (4 units)*
- ~~POLS 583   Resource Development for Nonprofit Agencies (4 units)~~
- ~~POLS 585   Marketing and Public Relations for Nonprofit Agencies (2 units)~~
- *POLS 587   Grant Writing and Administration (2 units)*
- POLS 588   Emerging Trends & Issues in Nonprofit Administration (2-4 units)

Additional MPA Electives

At Least 4 Units Required, and up to 6 Units Allowed, to Fulfill 36 Units:

- POLS 320   State, County, & City Government (4 units)*
- POLS 330   Race, Ethnicity, & Politics (4 units)*
- POLS 420   American Political Development (4 units)*
- POLS 421   Federalism & IGR (4 units)*
- POLS 426   Legislative Process (4 units)*
- POLS 428   Seminar in California Politics and Government (4 units)*
- POLS 429   Interest Groups (4 units)*
- POLS 430   Introduction to Public Administration (4 units)*
- POLS 475   Urban Politics and Policy*
- POLS 481   Politics of Regulation and Land Use*
- ~~POLS 512   Organizational Development (4 units)~~
- ~~POLS 513   Leadership, Management, and Supervision (4 units)~~
- *POLS 596   Culminating Experience - Comprehensive Exam (4 units)*
- *POLS 597   Graduate Internship 1-4 (4 units Required)*
- *POLS 598   Culminating Experience - Capstone Project (4 units)*
- ~~POLS 599   Master's Thesis 2-4 (4 unit(s) Required~~

*No more than <u>one</u> undergraduate POLS course (4 units allowed)

The MPPA program would require the completion of 36 total units – 24 units in the Core (or required foundation courses), and 6-8 units in an "Emphasis Area," and at least 4 units on additional elective units (which can include Culminating Experience).

All courses, including any undergraduate course, must be completed with a grade of 'B' or better and an overall 3.0 GPA must be maintained while in the program.

APPENDIX II

Current Degree – SSU MPA Program

Requires 36 Units of Coursework +
4 Units of Culminating Experience = 40 Units Overall
(additionally, up to 12 units / 3 courses can be required as prerequisites)

Common Core Requirements - 20 Units

- POLS 502 - Organizational Theory and Analysis
- POLS 503 - Budget and Fiscal Administration
- POLS 505 - Research Methods
- POLS 539 - Program Implementation
- POLS 550 - Planning and Evaluation
- POLS 580 - Nonprofit Dynamics: Politics and Community Environment

Public Management Concentration Requirements - 16 Units

- POLS 501 - The Administrative State
- POLS 503A - Public Finance
- POLS 504A - Public Personnel Administration
- POLS 506 - Public Policy Process
- POLS 511 - Labor Relations
- POLS 538 - Administrative Law

Nonprofit Concentration Requirements - 16 Units

- POLS 503B - Fiscal Management of Nonprofit Agencies
- POLS 504B - Personnel Administration for Nonprofit Organizations
- POLS 581 - Nonprofit Governance and Legal Issues
- POLS 582 - Planning and Nonprofit Agencies
- POLS 583 - Resource Development for Nonprofit Agencies
- POLS 585 - Marketing and Public Relations for Nonprofit Agencies
- POLS 587 - Grant Writing and Administration

Electives - 4 Units Total, can include:

- POLS 507 - Ethics in Administration
- POLS 512 - Organizational Development
- POLS 513 - Leadership and Supervision
- POLS 560 - Special Issues in Public Policy
- POLS 588 - Issues in Nonprofit Administration
- POLS 597 - Graduate Internship (4 Unit(s) Required)

- [POLS 598 - Capstone Project](#) (4 Unit(s) Required)
- [POLS 599 - Master's Thesis](#) (4 Unit(s) Required)

Culminating Experience

All students in the M.P.A. program are required to complete either a thesis, a comprehensive examination, or a capstone project prior to award of the degree. Those opting for a thesis as their culminating experience are required to complete 40 units of coursework, exclusive of prerequisites, and can include 4 units of

- [POLS 599](#)
  (Thesis Prep) as an elective. Students electing to take the comprehensive exam must complete 40 units of total coursework exclusive of prerequisites and -
- [POLS 596](#)
  (exam preparation). Students choosing a capstone project must complete 40 units of coursework, exclusive of prerequisites, and can include 4 units
- [POLS 598](#)
  (Capstone Project) as an elective.

APPENDIX III

MPA Coordinator Responsibilities, Last DRAFT: Fall 2023

Advise all MPA students (currently we have ≅ 55 fee-paying students – as of Spring 2023).

Develop class schedule for each semester, approximately one semester in advance (Pending Program Review and curricular revisions, tentative schedule through Spring 2025).

- o Work with the Chair and Dean's office to determine resource availability for the total number of units we wish to offer;

- o Work with administrative support to determine which classes are most in demand if there is a question about class schedule priorities;

Make offers to Adjunct Lecturer Colleagues to teach classes (this occurs during scheduling), occasionally make emergency hires if we cannot fill a position with our roster of available faculty.

The Coordinator chairs Capstone committees for students completing the Capstone culminating experience option as appropriate. The average number of students served for Capstone is around 4 students per semester. Fall semester tends to be lower; Spring semester higher. The Coordinator may not sit on all Capstone committees, yet will also administer the MPA Comprehensive Exam each semester and head the evaluation of those Exams working with Colleagues.

- o Chairing requires advising and supporting students in developing their project, writing their prospectus during the first semester, completing an IRB application if necessary, advising during the second semester of project execution, scheduling their presentation, and assessing the final paper with one other committee member.

Oversee comprehensive exams for exam-taking students each semester.

- o Exams are created from an existing bank of test questions.

- o Schedules the exams (the schedule is more or less set already).

- o Be available via email for questions during the exam (logistics issues only).

- o Assess exams with 1-2 other faculty.

- o Work with admin. support to generate outcome letters for students.

Coordinator attends committee meetings:

- o Graduate Studies Subcommittee (GSS), meetings every other Thursday from 10am-12pm (usually does not run the full 2 hours).

- School of Social Sciences Curriculum Committee, every other Thursday (opposite from GSS) from 1pm-2pm.

- Optional committee work on the School of Social Sciences Internship Committee and School of Social Sciences Undergraduate Research Committee.

- As-needed meetings with fellow Graduate Coordinators in the School of Social Sciences and with the Dean

Prior to "hiatus" for MPA, assess all MPA student applications on two cycles: Applications arrive by Oct 30th and by March 30th.

- Assess each application and determine if applicant is admitted or declined, and if admitted if they require any pre-requisite classes.

- Work closely with admin support to complete the process.

- Chair is available for consultation.

Serve as advisor to the MPA Student Association (MPASA), our student club.

- Work with the three student officers on an as-needed basis.

- Work with MPASA to develop 1-3 professional development events per year. Some of these events are annual and we have a pretty good system for running them. Students carry the majority of the responsibility to organize and host the event, but the advisor supports their work, ensures they comply with SSU club rules, and attends the events to provide introductions, thank-you's, follow-ups, and any other necessary support work.

- At minimum we host an annual professional networking mixer and a "Women in Leadership" speaking panel.

Maintain connections with community partners, and develop connections with community partners.

Communicate with MPA students through the MPA listserv. This includes sharing the upcoming semester schedule and relevant deadlines, and forwarding professional development, career, and scholarship opportunities to students. Can work with admin. support on this effort.

Work closely with the Department Chair as-needed.

Address emergent issues with students and faculty. The Chair and Dean's office can be of support here.

Report out MPA updates to monthly Dept. meetings. (Q. for All?: Can ask for someone to do this on your behalf if Coordinator is unable to attend the meetings?)

To add / missing:

Maintain progress to issues identified under "Program Review;"
Review Adjuncts as stated / recommended in the CBA;

Any role / duties during Winter & Summer months? Adminssions evalution; incoming and continuous student advising; Capstone work; IRB compliance and proposal assistance; most work is uncompensated – tend to be very busy for Ggaduate program Coordinators.

Finally…what is missing? Evaluation of not just new admits, but re-admits? Service to other non-MPA students?; moves to increase diversity of the program across multiple metrics?; data collection / Culminating Experience data? Paperwork for any and all things?

APPENDIX IV

Graduate Program Coordinator Responsibilities, DRAFT, Graduate Studies Office (GSO & Graduate Studies Subcommittee (GSS), Last DRAFT: Fall 2023

I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

A. Advertising/Recruiting
 1. Organize/construct/maintain Graduate Program website
 2. Disseminate informational materials to School, University, and public
 3. Attend Recruitment events
 4. Respond to prospective student inquiries

B. Departmental/Programmatic
 1. Policy/curriculum
  a. Initiation/drafting of policy/curriculum changes
  b. Update policy/curriculum changes in various sources
   SSU catalog
   SSU/department website
   Brochures
  c. Oversee/coordinate graduate courses with Curriculum
  d. Organize TA or GA assignments and associated waivers
Committee/Department/Program
 2. Chair/member/coordinator of Departmental/Program Graduate Committee
 3. Faculty support
  a. Orient/supervise new faculty in program
 4. Information coordination related to graduate program
  a. Reports from Graduate Studies Subcommittee
  b. Information sharing with individual graduate programs at SSU
  c. Information sharing with related graduate programs at other institutions
 5. Decide/coordinate approval of Project Continuation funds
  Review of student progress reports
 6. Gather/coordinate/draft information for program reviews
  Organize external review
  Assemble analyses and appendices for self-study
  Write narrative regarding program description, assessment, and action items
 7. Negotiate with other departments/faculty
  a. Access to space/equipment
  b. Attract and assign faculty to serve on student committees
  c. cross-disciplinary coursework and advising
 8. Organize Review for Graduation with Distinction
  a. Write notification letter to students graduating with distinction

C. University-Wide
    1. Representative to Graduate Studies Subcommittee of EPC
    2. Occasional Representation in review committees
        a. WASC Review/visit
        b. University Planning

II. STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVITIES

A. Prior to entering program
    1. Contact person for all inquiries about Graduate Program
        a. Phone, email, letter communications
        b. Present overview of Graduate Program and suitability to potential applicant
        c. Advise potential applicants on Graduate Program in general and relevance to career goals
    2. Contact applicants regarding status of application
    3. Initial review of applicants
    4. Coordinate review of applicants with potential major advisors
    6. Lead Department/Graduate Committee selection process
    7. Contact applicants regarding acceptance/non-acceptance of application to Program
    8. Signing/filing recommendation on applicants to Admissions and Records

B. In program
    1. Advising/orienting students
        a. General advisor to students throughout program (individuals or cohorts)
    2. Disseminate timely information to students
        a. Maintain mail and email list
    3. Tracking of students through program
        a. Maintaining adequate progress
        b. Change in status determination and filing forms
        c. Review and signing of GS01 and GS02 forms
    4. Police policy/curriculum requirements
        a. Timely signing/filing of forms
        b. Checking progress of individuals through program milestones
            * Student coursework plan
            * Thesis/Project committee selection
            * Advancement to Candidacy
            * Culminating Experience
        c. Advising/informing students on progress through program
    5. Nominate students for appropriate awards, provide letters or recommendation
    6. Negotiate/determine course validation for credits past seven-year limit
    7. Coordinate/oversee scheduling/advertising of public thesis/project defense
    8. Maintain student files
    9. For some programs - Teaching Associate or Graduate Assistant Coordination
        a. Submit POAs and assignments for TA/GA positions each semester
        b. Assign students to specific TA/GA positions based on student and faculty input
    10. Provide Graduate Funding Options
        a. Advertise encourage use of range of Graduate financial support mechanisms for
            * Encourage Graduate Equity Candidates

                * Encourage participation in FAFSA
                * Manage Tuition Waiver process
                * Identify and encourage field-specific Funding/Support

11. Collect and maintain student data for program review
    a. Identify and maintain components of student data
        * entry date, advancement to candidacy date, completion date
        * program-specific assessment mechanisms (exam/thesis/project rubrics)
    b. Collect student data from Office of Institutional Effectiveness
        * demographic data (ethnicity, first generation, financial aid)
        * time to completion

C. Post-graduation

1. Post-graduation assessment of program and data for program review
    * Alumni employment/graduate school access
2. Organizing recommendations/documentation for prior students