

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Assessment Summary

Administrative Unit: Political Science

Contact Person: Doctor of Public Administration

Email: dbaracskey@valdosta.edu

Phone: (229) 333-5771

Assessment Cycle (academic or calendar year): 2007-08

Mission (related to VSU mission): The Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) is a practitioner-oriented degree program that prepares students for leadership, management, communication, and problem solving in today's complex public service and not-for-profit environments.

Assessment History (discuss here how and when the unit developed its current assessment program, what it used prior to starting that program to assess its effectiveness, etc.):

The Doctor of Public Administration (D.P.A.) assessment process is relatively new since the program itself was approved by the Board of Regents in January 2007 and is only in its second academic year. The framework developed for DPA assessment builds upon the foundational assessments initially developed by the Department of Political Science through its assessment plan in 1998, designed for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program, which has since then been amended. This foundation is enhanced with the higher expectations and greater rigor necessary for performance at the doctoral level.

The DPA program is 54 total semester hours consisting of core (required) courses, methods courses, concentration area courses, and guided elective courses. The two initial required courses, PADM 9000 Administration and Government and PADM 9030 Logic of Inquiry in Public Administration introduce DPA students to the essential concepts and theories, along with methods and approaches necessary to master research and learning in the field. DPA faculty committee members review end-of-course evaluations written by the faculty for that particular course, and consequently monitor student progress. For those students deemed deficient in core areas, the DPA faculty committee prescribes remedial work. Additionally, all DPA students are expected to complete and maintain current professional portfolios, which DPA faculty routinely examine. These portfolios consist of programmatic artifacts which demonstrate each student's gained knowledge, as assessed through course examinations, term papers and projects, and other similar outputs.

In addition to evaluations of students' progress throughout the DPA core, methods, and concentration course areas, committee members will evaluate student competency in the PADM 9990 Capstone Seminar (3 hours) and the PADM 9999 Final Project/Organizational Analysis project (6 hours). Students will be expected to complete and successfully defend a dissertation-quality applied research project to graduate with the DPA degree.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes: (revised in spring 2008)

1. Display a deep understanding and substantial competency in the core subject matter and methodologies that are central to preparation for the DPA degree.

2. Exhibit a firm understanding of the importance and relevance of the history and evolution of public administration and the institutions of government.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply their advanced understanding of public administration theories and tools to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and representativeness of public organizations.
4. Serve as agents of analysis and innovation in public sector organizations by using their knowledge and training to advance the scope of possibilities for organizations committed to public service.

Assessments: (revised in spring 2008) (include when and to whom these are administered, and align goals with specific assessments):

1. Student knowledge will be assessed by means of course examinations, term papers and projects, and other outputs. Adjustments for students for whom remedial work is indicated will be prescribed and monitored by the DPA faculty committee. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3)
2. Students will conduct research projects that build upon the broad intellectual tradition of public administration and present their documented findings during residency seminars. (Outcomes 3, 4)
3. The capstone seminar will assess student knowledge through an applied project, or case study, or both. (Outcomes 3, 4)
4. Students will be expected to apply, in innovative ways, concepts, theories, and ideas learned during their studies in the DPA program to a specific organization in the public sector. (Outcome 4)

2007-2008 (or 2007) * This was the first year of the DPA program

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):
Approximately 25 doctoral students entered the DPA program and were required to enroll in the PADM 9030 Logic of Inquiry in Public Administration course, and most enrolled in a second course, PADM 9000 Administration and Government. (Outcome 1); These two courses, the first of which is a methods course, and the second is a core course, introduced students to the theory and methods behind public administration thought. Students demonstrated mastery of the concepts introduced by successfully passing examinations, working on research papers, and engaging in online course discussions.
- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:
Students' performance in these initial courses was evaluated both by the Coordinator of Public Administration and the public administration faculty member who taught PADM 9000, as well as other members of the graduate faculty in the Department of Political Science. (Outcomes 1 and 2); Both courses have focused on preparing students for their capstone seminar / projects, which will satisfy Outcomes 3 and 4 above, but as of yet, students have not progressed to this stage of the degree.
- Modifications Made:
For Outcomes 1 and 2, no modifications have been made at this time.
For Outcomes 3 and 4, students will be evaluated when they enter these stages of the degree, and modifications will be made as needed.

Unit Director**Date**

President/VP for Unit**Date**

Adapted from: University of Alabama SACS site (<http://sacs.ua.edu/degreeInfo2.cfm?college=2&dept=50>);

University of Western Kentucky SACS Accreditation Review Process (<http://www.wku.edu/sacs/assessmentmanual.htm>) ; and

Mrs. Marila D. Palmer, VP-Executive Affairs & Planning, LeTourneau University, Presentation to 2008 SACS-COC Institute

Appendix A: Original Outcomes and Assessments

Expected Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Gain substantial competency in the core subject matter and methodologies that are central to preparation for the DPA degree.
2. Obtain a firm understanding of the importance and relevance of the broad intellectual tradition of public administration
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply their advanced understanding of public administration theories and tools to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and representativeness of public organizations.
4. Serve as agents of change and effectiveness in public sector organizations by using their knowledge and training to advance the scope of possibilities for organizations committed to public service.

Assessments:

1. DPA faculty committee members will review end-of-course evaluations written by the faculty for that particular course. Adjustments for students for whom remedial work is indicated will be prescribed and monitored by the DPA faculty committee. Artifacts of gained knowledge will be course examinations, term papers and projects, and other outputs.
2. Students will conduct research projects and present their documented findings during residency seminars.
3. The capstone seminar will assess student knowledge through applied projects or case studies or both.
4. Students will complete professional portfolios that will be assessed by the DPA faculty.
5. Students will complete and successfully defend a dissertation-quality applied research project.