

# Institutional Effectiveness Report

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## Assessment Summary

**Department or Division:** Political Science

**Degree Program:** Master of Public Administration

**Contact Person:** Jim Peterson

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**Assessment Cycle** (academic or calendar year): 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08

**Mission** (related to VSU mission): The Master of Public Administration (MPA) is a professionally oriented degree program that prepares students for productive and rewarding careers in public service.

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

The Department of Political Science instituted its initial assessment plan in 1998. At that time, the department created learning outcomes for the MPA, aligned them with the curriculum, and created a comprehensive exam for all students at the end of their last semester in the program. A committee of graduate faculty members reviewed the results and provided evaluations to the students. In 2001, the department replaced the comprehensive exam with a two-course package that included PADM 7900 (Capstone Seminar in Public Administration) and PADM 7210 (Internship in Public Administration). Students register for both courses at the same time, in their last semester. The same instructor teaches both, and students in each are combined into a course that is fully on-line, in WebCT Vista. Students who have sufficient experience in government or non-profit management use that experience in lieu of an actual internship. Students who lack sufficient experience in government or non-profit management must do an internship in such an organization. By the time they complete PADM 7210, they must have performed 300 hours of work in that organization, submitted weekly reports in WebCT to the course instructor, and taken part in the on-line internship colloquia with other similarly situated students, within the framework of PADM 7210. The MPA Coordinator and course instructor jointly decide if the student meets the above test of "sufficient experience."

Assessment also centers on regular offering of courses whose content and papers focused on the main features of ethical management in a multi-cultural context. In addition, assessment planning included incorporation into PADM 7300 ( Foundations Seminar in Public Administration) of required reading of *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*, by Gregory M. Scott and Stephen M. Garrison.

During PADM 7900, a major project is completion of a professionally oriented Portfolio. In the Portfolio that is submitted on a CD, students include an up-to-date resume, goals statement, and 10-15 captioned artifacts that present key milestones in the academic and career progression of the student. The

instructor fills out a Portfolio check list after the student has successfully completed the project, and both the instructor and student sign that statement. After the end of the semester, both the CD with the Portfolio and the check list go to the office of the MPA Coordinator, where they remain on file.

### **Expected Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of the basic technical skills needed to succeed in public or non-for-profit management.
2. Develop a broad outlook and an understanding of ethical factors required of program managers and administrators in public or non-for-profit agencies operating in a multicultural context.
3. Strengthen oral and written communication skills.
4. Gain familiarity with up-to-date information management systems.

### **Assessments** (include when and to whom these are administered, and align goals with specific assessments):

1. The comprehensive understanding of basic technical skills essential for successful public or non-for-profit management will be demonstrated by successful completion of course work and PADM 7900. Outcomes 1,2,3, & 4
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethical management in a multi-cultural context through course papers, portfolio assessment and employer surveys. Outcome 2
3. Students will demonstrate effective communication skills through written and oral presentations in program course work. Outcome 3
4. Students will demonstrate familiarity with up-to-date information management systems through course examinations, portfolio analysis, exit and alumni questionnaires and employer surveys. Outcome 4

### **2005-2006**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

**NASPAA Accreditation:** In July, NASPAA accredited the MPA Program for the 2005-11 period, as reported in the FY 2006 Annual report. (Outcomes 1,2,3, & 4)

**DPA Proposal:** The MPA Coordinator/Committee prepared the final draft of the DPA, sent it to three external consultants for review, and sent it to the Board of Regents in December, according to the 2005-06 Strategic Plan and FY 2006 Annual Report (Outcomes 1,2,3, & 4)

**Capstone Course and Portfolio:** A total of 63 students took the combined Capstone/Internship course (PADM 7900/7210) during the year. These numbers included 19 in the fall, 21 in the spring, and 23 in the summer. (Outcomes 1 & 4)

**Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context:** A total of 46 students took coursework in this area. These numbers included 22 in two fall sections of Democracy and Public Administration (PADM 7260) as well as 24 in two spring sections of Managing Diversity in the Public Workplace (PADM 7220). (Outcome 2)

**Communication Skills:** As reported in the FY 2006 Annual Report, PADM 7300 became a required on-line course for all entering MPA students in 2005-06. A total of 87 students took this Foundations Seminar in Public Administration (PADM 7300). These numbers included 37 in the fall, 29 in the spring, and 21 in the summer. (Outcome 3)

- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

The MPA Coordinator/Committee monitors compliance with NASPAA requirements and guidelines throughout the period.

The MPA Coordinator/Committee monitors passage of the DPA Proposal through the designated check points.

The Capstone Course and Portfolio are evaluated by the course instructor and MPA Coordinator.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the courses that deal with Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the Foundations Seminar.

- Modifications Made:

**For Outcomes 1 & 4:** No modifications are recommended at this time.

**For Outcome 2:** The MPA Committee met and decided to schedule a wider variety of courses in the area of ethical management in a multi-cultural context.

**For Outcome 3:** Sections of PADM 7300 were scheduled throughout the year.

## 2006-2007

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

**DPA Proposal:** In January, 2007, the Board of Regents approved the DPA, according to the FY 2007 Annual Report. (Outcomes 1,2,3, &4)

**Capstone Course and Portfolio:** A total of 52 students took the combined Capstone/Internship course (PADM 7900/7210) during the year. These numbers included 20 in the fall, 17 in the spring, and 15 in the summer. (Outcomes 1 & 4)

**Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context:** A total of 62 students took coursework in this area. These numbers included 27 in two fall sections of Democracy and Public Administration (PADM 7260), 30 in two spring sections of Labor Law (PADM 7180), and 5 in the summer section of Managing Diversity in the Public Workplace (PADM 7220). (Outcome 2)

**Communication Skills:** A total of 82 students took the Foundations Seminar in Public Administration (PADM 7300). These numbers included 36 in two fall sections, 28 in the spring, and 18 in the summer. The decision was made to schedule two sections of the course in the fall, based on high student enrollments in fall 2005. (Outcome 3)

- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

The MPA/DPA Coordinator/Committee monitors implementation of the DPA, following January approval by the Board of Regents, according to the 2006-07 Strategic Plan.

The Capstone Course and Portfolio are evaluated by the course instructor and MPA Coordinator.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the courses that deal with Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the Foundations Seminar and recommend changes.

- Modifications Made:

**For Outcomes 1,2,3 & 4:** DPA courses were scheduled, following January approval by the Board of Regents.

**For Outcome 3:** Two sections of PADM 7300 were scheduled for fall 2006, based on the high numbers of students in that course in fall 2005, according to the FY 2007 Annual Report.

## 2007-2008

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

**MPA/DPA Program Links:** The MPA/DPA Coordinator/Committee reviewed the need for changes in the MPA courses listed in the Graduate Catalog, in light of the probability that many DPA students will take a Concentration Area in public administration, according to the 2007-8 Strategic Plan. They recommended creation of four new courses. (Outcomes 1,2,3, & 4)

**Capstone Course and Portfolio:** A total of 51 students took the combined Capstone/Internship course (PADM 7900/7210) during the year. These numbers included 19 in the fall, 14 in the spring, and 18 in the summer. (Outcomes 1 & 4)

**Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context:** A total of 49 students took coursework in this area. These numbers include 11 in two fall sections of Public Sector Labor Relations (PADM 7010), 24 in two fall sections of Democracy and Public Administration (PADM 7260), and 14 in Democracy and Public Administration (PADM 7260) in the summer. (Outcome 2)

**Communication Skills:** A total of 69 students took the Foundations Seminar in Public Administration (PADM 7300). These numbers included 30 in the fall, 24 in the spring, and 15 in the summer. (Outcome 3)

- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

The MPA/DPA Coordinator/Coordinator evaluate the need for new MPA courses in light of DPA Concentration Area needs.

The Capstone Course and Portfolio are evaluated by the course instructor and MPA Coordinator.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the courses that deal with Ethical Management in a Multicultural Context.

The course instructor and MPA Coordinator evaluate the Foundations Seminar.

- Modifications Made: **For Outcomes 1,2,3 & 4:** Four new courses were added to the MPA curriculum, in part to support those DPA students who elect to take a Concentration Area in public administration.

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Dept. Head/ Director	Date	Dean	Date	VPAA	Date
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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

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**2005-2006**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):
- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:
- Modifications Made:

**2006-2007**

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**2007-2008**

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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

**Draft profile descriptions for Constitutional Law I, II, and III to replace current description in the VSU catalogue.**

**Initial course description in the Catalogue**

**POLS 4200 Constitutional Law I**

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law emphasizing leading constitutional cases with respect to separation of powers, federalism, rights and liberties, and role of law enforcement in relation to civil and criminal law.

**Newly proposed revision**

**POLS 4200 Constitutional Law I**

A study of American constitutional law dealing with the structure and powers of the national government outlined in the first four Articles of the Constitution. The primary focus is on the Supreme Court's decisions and the doctrinal impact of those decisions on the structure and relationships of the three branches of the government (Separations of powers), and between the national government and state governments (Federalism).

**Initial course description in the Catalogue**

**POLS 4200 Constitutional Law II**

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law, emphasizing leading cases with respect to civil liberties. Special attention will be given to the due process of the law clauses and the rights of the accused

**Newly proposed revision**

**POLS 4202 Constitutional Law II**

A study of American Constitutional law with emphasis on property and economic liberties' rights, due process of the law, obtaining evidence, and rights to privacy. The primary focus is on the Supreme Court's decisions and the doctrinal impact of those decisions on the relationships between the national government, the state governments, and citizens of the United States. Emphasis is placed on Substantive and Procedural Due Process with focus on "ends and means" of government actions.

**Initial course description in the Catalogue**

**POLS 4200 Constitutional Law I**

A comprehensive study of American constitutional law emphasizing leading decisions with respect to First Amendment and Supreme Court's policy role.

**Newly proposed Version**

**POLS 4203 Constitutional Law III**

A study of American constitutional law focusing on civil rights, civil liberties, and equal protection of the laws. This course examines Supreme Court decisions and the doctrinal impact of those decisions on conflicts between the values of "Order and Liberties" and "Equality and Civil Rights" pitting both national and state governments against the people. Constitutional claims examined include denial of rights under the Bill of Rights, the equal protection of laws under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and any of the several Civil Rights legislation enacted by Congress since the Civil War.

**Revised Political Science Department Learning Outcomes**  
(Approved Spring 2008)

1. Political science majors will possess the requisite knowledge of the American Political System, including an understanding of the structure and process of the federal, state, and local governments, enabling them to become informed and responsible citizens.

2. Political science majors will demonstrate knowledge of technological advances and scientific inquiry, enabling them to identify and utilize appropriate tools, such as word processors, spread sheets, database management systems, or statistical packages, in the pursuit of resolving issues or answering questions.

3. Political science majors will demonstrate through both oral and written work that they are skilled in inquiry, logical reasoning, and critical analysis, thereby enabling them to make, synthesize, and presenting logical arguments leading to creative solutions to problems.

4. Political science majors will recognize, demonstrate knowledge of, and analyze issues in political behavior as it relates to value systems and ethics.