

Understanding Excellence
in Public Administration:
The Report of the Task Force on
Educating for Excellence in the Master
of Public Administration Degree of the
American Society for Public Administration

Nicholas Henry
Georgia Southern University

Charles T. Goodsell
Virginia Tech University

Laurence E. Lynn, Jr.
University of Texas

Camilla Stivers
Cleveland State University

Gary L. Wamsley
Virginia Tech University

ABSTRACT

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration, the report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), has been received both well and controversially. Practitioners have responded warmly and positively to its serialization in *PA Times*. Most academics like it, although some have reservations, as they expressed during well-attended panels devoted to the report, which were held during the national conferences of NASPAA in 2008 and ASPA in 2009. Some of the report's recommended actions, such as those that touch on accreditation, honest advertising, programmatic clarity, and core curricula, have spurred some debate. It is worth noting, therefore, that the Task Force members, though just five in number, are broadly representative of pertinent intellectual currents. The report

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

reveals strands of thinking that are held by constitutionalists and communalists; by technocrats and philosophers; by management scientists and political scientists; by public administrationists and public policy analysts; by those who push the hard-nosed techniques of the New Public Management and those who favor the soft-schnozzed values of the New Public Administration.

This report is a first step. It is up to the professionals and professors, who are ‘public administration,’ to take the next steps.

NOTE: In the interests of wide dissemination, a version of this report was also serialized in *PA Times* (Henry, Goodsell, Lynn, Stivers, & Wamsley, May 2008, pp. 15, 21; June 2009, pp. 21, 23; July 2008, p. 21).

UNDERSTANDING EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In the October, 2007, issue of *PA Times*, Harvey White, president of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), pointed to “several disturbing developments ... pushing public administration towards academic obfuscation” and “an increasing propensity to subvert MPA [Master of Public Administration degree] programs to prepare students for almost everything except careers in public administration. This trend suggests dreadful consequences for our profession” (White, 2007, p. 16).

President White asked the Task Force to reflect on the issue of how ASPA can best support excellence in ‘programs for the profession of public administration. This charge, as the members of the Task Force interpreted it, required us to consider sources of the problem identified by President White, as they have developed over recent decades, in order to specify our view of the challenge to public administration education at this juncture, and to offer our understanding of “excellence” as the catalyst for a broad conversation, within the profession, regarding future education for public service careers.

Briefly summarized, we see the source of the problem as twofold. First, there is a proliferation of degree programs whose very richness and diversity of purpose and substance has tended to obscure the uniqueness of public administration as a career commitment and intellectual enterprise. The problem is that the development of a complex array of degrees and curricula (approximately 260 programs) has blurred the core mission of public administration, the MPA, and the values that ground it.

Second, public administration faculties and the university administrators to whom they report — especially those educated in academic disciplines — too

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

often fail to recognize that their mission is to provide professional education for public service, not to provide education and socialization in an academic discipline. Professional education is inherently multidisciplinary and involves both didactic and experiential instruction toward the goal of preparing graduates to practice their profession. The field of public administration is thus more akin to the nature of law, business, medicine, urban planning, social work, or public health than it is to a traditional academic discipline. For many mid-career students who already have academic and professional degrees, the MPA becomes a supplementary or supervening degree. Thus, for pre-career or mid-career students, the MPA and its values of public service provide a professional and intellectual center of gravity for the practice of public administration, which we believe must be revived as the first step in advancing excellence in both the education and practice of public administration.

THE ISSUES

In the nearly 100 years since professional training in public administration began, several degree programs have sprung up, in addition to the original master's degree in public administration. (For a brief history of these developments, see Appendix A.) These include the master of public policy (MPP), master of management, and the master of public affairs (MPAff). The reasons for this profusion are intellectual, institutional, and driven in part by universities and programs searching for market niches. Taken as a whole, these overlapping, related — but different — degrees are an agglomeration of different paradigms, biases, foci, perspectives, and favored theories and methodologies.

Another possible factor contributing to the blurred distinctiveness of public administration and the MPA degree also may be a significant change in the broader public definition of governance. Forty years ago, governance was largely what government officials did to carry forward legislated mandates. Appointed and career government officials were, for the most part, the persons directly involved in governance. This is still the case today, but there is wide agreement that these people are not the only ones involved in the governance process. Extensive privatization and the practice of contracting out once-governmental programs and functions to nonprofit organizations and private corporations has raised awareness that governance in many instances has become a delegated, shared, collaborative enterprise that often crosses some or all sectors. This is so much the case that texts and journal articles sometimes equate governance with outsourcing and network collaboration, while the core values of governing, such as representativeness, responsiveness, and responsibility, are marginalized in favor of significant but — depending on circumstances — less-important managerial concerns that include producing deliverables on time and under budget.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

The proliferation of sites and contexts of governance has not eliminated the differences between government, nonprofits, and private contractors. Rather, it has made governing much more complex and raised a host of issues at the interface between the three sectors. For purposes of this report, the most important fact is that changes have worked to diminish both the understanding and appreciation of a public administration career's unique importance as the grounding for public service — regardless of the sector where that service is performed.

The resulting diversity can be construed positively. It can be argued that it enriches academic discourse and attracts good scholars. It offers students more choices, provides faculty with opportunities to pursue particular intellectual paths, and gives institutions distinctive ways to attract and retain graduate students. Employers, particularly those in metropolitan areas where there are a variety of needs, may benefit because they can more readily find persons with specialized skills or knowledge.

Despite these plausible advantages, however, the proliferation of both action-settings and degree programs has produced confusion about the differences among them, and obscured what we believe to be the core mission and values of academic public administration and the specific focus of the MPA as a professional degree.

To understand the depth of confusion about the MPA and “MPA-related degrees,” one needs only to examine Wikipedia's articles on degrees in public administration, public policy, and public affairs. The National Association of Public Administration and Affairs (NASPAA) features links to these articles on its home page. The descriptions acknowledge some differences between the MPA — which tilts toward “operationalization” and “implementation” — and the MPP, and the “similar” Master of Public Affairs, which leans toward “policy analysis” and “design.” But the descriptions go on to emphasize how these degrees have “blended and converged.” According to the Wikipedia articles, “the typical core curricula” for both the MPA and the MPP begins with courses in microeconomics, public finance, research methods, and statistics; these four courses are listed in precisely the same order in the separate articles about each degree. Core courses for both degrees also include policy analysis, ethics, public management, geographic information systems, and program evaluation. (Wikipedia, 2007a, b, n.p.)

This tendency to coalesce the public administration and public policy degrees only reflects the general confusion that has come to surround the MPA and related degrees. Not only are the curricula of MPA and “MPA-related degrees” quite different, but the richness of “MPA-related degrees” is not directly translatable to, nor simply a matter of insertion into, a professional public administration curriculum — at least not without thoughtful planning.

MPA programs are meant to be unique, and should be. They must

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

consciously and deliberately prepare students for highly challenging careers in the administration of government agencies, and in nonprofit or philanthropic entities serving the public good. This does not mean that someone with an MPP or MPAff cannot be a competent public administrator or that someone with an MPA cannot be a competent policy analyst or be knowledgeable concerning international affairs or administration. It does mean, however, that the curricula for the degrees should be different or distinct enough to maximize the job-effectiveness of the degree-recipient's chosen career path. The wide variation that exists among the different degree programs can serve this purpose rationally and beneficially only if the distinctiveness of the MPA, and indeed that of each of the related degrees, is made clear.

Unfortunately, this is not presently the case. NASPAA's accreditation process and the *U.S. News & World Report* rating systems (the problems of which would entail a lengthy analysis) tend to cluster and synthesize assessments of sometimes profoundly different programs, making it more difficult for any one degree-type to maintain a distinctive profile. Perhaps the most significant source of incoherence and overlap derives from the efforts of institutions to recruit and retain students. In doing so, institutions have understandably couched the descriptions of their programs in the most encompassing terms possible, rather than specifying what they can best equip students to do. For example, one institution informs prospective students that they "will be prepared to work in positions of influence at the interface of business, government, and nonprofit organizations." This may indeed be the case, depending on the structure and length of the degree program, the quality of the faculty, and the status of the university, but it is a claim that should not be made lightly.

A lesser but contributing source of incoherence and overlap may lie in the quite natural tendency of program faculty to mold their courses to their research interests. This is not necessarily detrimental, and indeed can be beneficial, if it does not displace the important elements of a professional curriculum. But faculty are often as unclear about the differences in the MPA-related degrees as is everyone else, and an overemphasis on their own interests in such circumstances can contribute to incoherence, and result in students not receiving knowledge that is important to their chosen career paths.

In light of these factors and trends, the Task Force believes that the first step in enhancing excellence in public administration education and the distinctiveness of the MPA degree is to reassert and re-clarify its mission and values. Although the three degrees we are considering have some shared attributes, we believe the MPA is, and ought to be, distinctly different from those in the realms of policy, management, and public affairs. To make such an analysis we turn therefore to what we believe should be the core of public administration.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

THE CORE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The role of a public administrator may be one of the most difficult and challenging in contemporary America, a country with a political culture noted for its ambivalence toward “unelected bureaucrats.” Despite this ambivalence, the public will cannot be given effect without a competent and honest public administration. Paul Appleby succinctly expressed this fact of life for a modern democratized republic:

Public administration is policy-making. But it is not autonomous, exclusive, or isolated policy-making. It is policy-making on a field where mighty forces contend, forces engendered in and by the society. It is policy-making subject to still other and various policy-makers. Public administration is one of a number of basic political processes by which this people achieves and controls governance (Appleby, 1949, p. 170).

Thus, the core mission of those offering the MPA degree must be to develop the capacity of graduates to exercise delegated public authority wisely, effectively, and lawfully.

In fulfillment of this mission, the Task Force believes that MPA education should accomplish two goals: First, transmittal of a full awareness of the broad issues of constitutionalism, politics, and democratic theory that are innately embedded in the practice of public administration in a republic such as ours; and second, transmittal of the essential professional, or “craft” knowledge of the field, along with experiential exposure of students to the world of practice, by means of non-classroom projects, internships, case studies, practitioner involvement in teaching, etc.

As to the first objective, the anchor of American public administration, regardless of the level of government, is the United States Constitution, along with the constitutions of the 50 states. Public administrators take an oath to uphold those constitutions. The profession’s central commitment must be to give specific and principled meaning to the oath of office, and what it means to be accountable to that oath. Public administrators are thus required to follow constitutional, statutory, and administrative law, plus court decisions and orders. Within this framework, the defining practice of governance is the interpretation and exercise of public authority. Those so charged should exercise their powers as astutely and knowledgeably as they can, with a conscious commitment to serving the public interest. This may be done in governmental or nongovernmental institutions, but the distinctiveness of career public service is that it is centered in administrative agencies. The curriculum for the MPA degree should be one that introduces or reinforces students’ understanding of their constitutionally delegated authority, and their career commitments to such agencies.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

In the United States, public administrators (with the exception of those in council-manager governments) operate within the constitutional separation of powers. In the American system of government, these powers are shared, and distributed among the branches. This means that the domain of administration, though usually situated in the executive branch, is directed, not by the chief executive alone, but also by legislatures and courts. This often places the administrative agency in the position of being responsible to multiple masters, prior statutes, and still-valid rulings. This situation can place on the shoulders of a public administrator the heavy responsibility of acting amidst conflicting pressures, while seeking to satisfy the long-term interests of a lawful society. The MPA degree should prepare a person for assuming such responsibility.

Although public-regarding decisions and judgments are often made outside the realm of a public agency, the distinctiveness of career public service should not be obscured by that fact. The institution at the heart of governance is, and should be, the administrative agency — one whose leaders and employees invest their careers in meeting communal, national, and global needs of the public. The duty to meet these needs requires that career public administrators exercise guidance and stewardship over activities delegated to other entities, in order to ensure that the terms of the public trust are fulfilled, and that activities inside and outside the public agency are consonant with the constitutional principles of individual rights, due process of law, equal protection, and the separation of powers.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION

The paradigms, theories, and general scholarship of this field must be comparable to that of any academic field, but they must meet a second challenge — to be appropriately framed and taught in ways that create and sustain a good, professional public administration program. Professional education must take the student from the abstract to the concrete, and from the concrete to the abstract, in order to become relevant. Indeed, it should foster *reflexivity*, the quality that enables the graduate to engage in *praxis*, i.e., to interrelate theory and practice — moving from one to the other, and back again. Another way to think of reflexivity and praxis is to think of it as the development of practical wisdom.

More concretely, a good public administration education program must provide the skills that practitioners need to work in and to lead complex organizations in political environments. It also must support effective and ethical administrative conduct, and stimulate graduates to think reflectively and reflexively of their responsibilities under the constitutions of the United States and their home states or jurisdictions, as well as those regarding their own potential contributions to the public interest within a pluralistic, democratic republic.

The most fundamental thrust of public administration education is to

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

promote and nourish among all those who participate in its programs a commitment to their core mission and values. It should be noted that values like constitutionalism, service, and the public interest are worth very little if they are simply rote definitions. They must be critically reflected upon and debated by students in order for them as practitioners to make wise judgments in any situation. Public administration education must offer students opportunities to enhance their reflective, critical, and reflexive capacities, and to share and debate their views with one another and their faculty, through discussion and reflection on classic and contemporary writings and case studies, as well as on current issues. Students should have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the political and economic context in which governance is practiced, and of public administration's place in society. They should engage in extended reflection on the ethical dimensions of governance. This extended and in-depth consideration of core values, the context and dynamics of governance generally, and of public administration specifically, is the foundation upon which students should build the development of specific technical skills.

Because public administration teachers first and foremost are academicians and come from a variety of disciplines (though perhaps more frequently political science), they may have had little occasion to consider the differences between an academic master's degree and a professional master's degree such as the MPA (or MBA, MD, JD, MPP, or MPAff). The difference is significant, but is all too often forgotten or never understood. Because of the MPA's professional nature since its 1911 origin in the training school of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, it has included a significant experiential and practical dimension. Public administration education should balance scholarly learning with a hands-on approach, recognizing that the MPA degree prepares people to achieve excellence in practice. To conserve that thrust, the case studies, internships, classroom exercises, and collaborative projects with existing agencies not only deepen students' experiences, but also hone their abilities to learn from practice.

Excellent education in public administration must tread a path that balances practical applications with consideration of theoretical issues, of philosophy, of history, and of applied social science and statistics. It also must meet, not only the needs of new pre-career students, but also those of mid-career managers, who entered public service prepared for a specialized occupation or profession — e.g., that of a lawyer, economist, or engineer — but found themselves administering. Students fresh from their undergraduate days are keen to learn the *how* of things — how to budget, how to diagnose organizational problems, and how to track management information. Students who may be educated or trained in other occupations, but who seek an MPA in mid-career, are weathered in the *hows* of administration and instead are more interested in the *whys* of things. They

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

appreciate the chance to step back from putting out the latest agency fire and instead think about why things happen the way they do — and what a life devoted to public service means for each of them. Excellent MPA programs must serve both kinds of needs and aspirations.

As a practical matter, we note that, in analyzing 46 of the top 50 Master of Public Administration programs identified by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2006, the leading core courses were “organizational concepts and institutions” and “policy evaluation” (both courses were required by 87 percent of all programs), “budgeting and finance” (85 percent), “public administration” (74 percent), “ethics and leadership” (59 percent), and “politics and legal institutions” (52 percent) (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008).

We do not want to wander into the thicket of contention that surrounds the concept of the “top 50 MPA programs,” but we do think it significant that these courses are found to this extent in those schools. (We also find it troublesome that these courses are *not* found in many of these schools.) The larger point to be made is that, regardless of the curricula of the so-called “top-50” schools, there are roughly 260 public administration or public administration-related degree programs. We believe that NASPAA and ASPA should undertake steps to assure that some mix of these courses is present in all MPA core curricula — especially courses that deal with the special constitutional nature of public-sector administration and organization, and public-sector ethics. We also believe it is essential that a required introductory course should include the place of public administration in society (in the study cited above, “public administration” and “politics and legal institutions” could fulfill this role), and that courses covering constitutional and communal values, plus the nature of public interest, are fundamental to a quality MPA curriculum. Other courses that we think should be in an MPA program worthy of its name are public human resources management, information resources and management, intergovernmental/intersectoral relations, and leadership.

The challenge before us is less one of prescribing the particular technical contents of an MPA program than it is one of resurrecting the core values that lie at the heart of public service. In the spirit of that challenge, our first recommendation is that NASPAA, ASPA, and other entities responsible for curricula in public administration and related master’s programs take specific steps to foster a dialogue on the issues raised in our report, in order for everyone in the profession to be able to reconnect with its core mission and values. More often than not, the reconnection can, and should, come about through debate and discussion. The most fundamental value-commitments of our profession are to ideals such as constitutionalism and the public interest, which require reflection and interpretation in particular contexts and circumstances. Thus,

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

it is fitting that what we are calling for, at its most basic level, is a great public conversation within the profession, and with its MPA-related academic programs — a conversation to engage its members in a process that simultaneously generates a reconsideration and renewal of our respective identities.

There are also action steps that we believe can and should be set in motion immediately, and we have conveyed such recommendations to ASPA President Harvey White in Appendix B.

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Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

APPENDIX A. THE HISTORY AND DECLINE OF THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEGREE

Our present welter of MPA and MPA-related degrees has its roots in the early 20th century.

The Master of Public Administration.

The very first professional education in public administration was not offered by universities. It was started in 1911 by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research's training school. The inclusion of public administration in political science curricula was fragmentary until the American Political Science Association formed a committee on practical training for public service in 1912, and persuaded the mayor of New York, in 1914, to call the first national conference on universities and public-service training.

The training school was launched under Bureau auspices only after spokesmen for leading universities like Yale and Columbia had rejected the idea of a public-service training program as too practical. It is thus worth noting that public administration has its own practical roots, and its emphasis on experiential learning stems from its origins in the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. (The Bureau was later moved to Syracuse University, where it became a training program under university auspices and eventually became the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Administration.)

As noted, public administration eventually found a home within universities, often in land-grant universities as a bureau of public administration, and later within political science departments. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, political science went through what was known as "the behavioral revolution," a decided shift towards positivism, empiricism, and quantification. Because public administration was involved in the preparation of professionals, it was difficult for the field to follow in lock-step with political science toward a social-science orientation. It came to be regarded by political science with an attitude somewhere between dubious tolerance and outright scorn. It was common to hear political scientists refer to public administration as "mere training" or "manhole-cover counting." Often they routinely re-conceptualized it as "the politics of bureaucracy."

Enrichment and Confusion.

During the 1960s, several coinciding developments were both enriching and confusing. One was the emergence of the "New Public Administration," a distinctly normative interpretation of the field that was viewed in a wide variety of ways. While this movement created considerable interest and discussion within the field, it did little to resolve the considerable confusion over the various degrees.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

Another was the Lyndon Johnson Administration's "Great Society" programs, which increased governmental demand for administrators and policy analysts. A number of universities responded to this need by creating separate programs or schools of public policy — taking care to avoid the term "public administration," lest they inherit some of the negativity that had been attached to it by political science.

Ideas that emerged in the 1990s also had an important impact on the MPA degree. Osborne and Gaebler's book *Reinventing Government* (1992) was widely read, and stimulated the Clinton Administration's administrative reform program as a response to Republicans who charged that its policies were just another manifestation of the Democrats' tax-and-spend approach to government. This development was both reflected and paralleled in academia by the emergence and practice of the "New Public Management" movement, which took organizational economics and a variety of management techniques from the private sector, and applied them to government. The movement also had international resonance in Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand — areas, where extensive social-welfare programs enacted after World War II were now viewed as too costly and too bureaucratic.

Thus, public administration is a multi-disciplinary, multi-paradigmatic field of study, research, and professional education that has been pulled — indeed torn — in several different directions. Taken as a whole, it is a rich mosaic of paradigmatic commitments, widely varying epistemological orientations, and equally varied attitudes toward educating future practitioners of a nascent profession. But, for our purposes here, the most significant factor is the increased confusion that has developed over different degrees, and its negative impact on the MPA degree.

Whether this disaggregated richness can be a solid basis for public administration is a huge question. But one thing is certain: It cannot do so without serious and thoughtful planning that addresses the confusion over degrees, and arrests the further denigration and decline of the reputation of the MPA.

The Master of Management.

Yet another development in this field was the growth of organizational sociology, which can be traced to the translation of Max Weber into English. This resulted in an enduring addition of organization theory courses to MPA and MPP programs, and in the emergence of Master of Management degrees. These programs are premised, in varying levels of intensity, on the idea that management is generic. This means that the sector, culture, institution, mission — whatever — are of little consequence to efficient and effective administration, and that "a body of knowledge [operations research, statistics, economics,

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

accounting, and organization theory are often cited] exists that is common to the fields of administration” (Kraemer & Perry, 1980, p. 91).

Most of the major schools of management (for instance, those at Cornell, Northwestern, Stanford, Yale, and the University of California campuses at Irvine, Los Angeles, and Riverside) are not accredited by NASPAA. The number of public administration programs that are housed within schools of business (a category that includes at least some schools of management, e.g., Willamette University) has fallen over the years, declining from 17 percent in 1973 to eight percent currently, even though many of these schools offer conventional MPA degrees, in addition to management or business degrees (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, 2005; 1986, p. xix).

The Master of Public Affairs.

Another feature of the early 1960s was the formation of schools of public and international affairs, which sought to be both comprehensive and international, and aimed to encompass diverse subjects of urban development, economic and social development, and comparative administration. In these institutional “stews,” public administration’s position in America was sometimes greatly diminished. The overall effect of these events further isolated and diminished public administration as an academic field, and further blurred the distinctions between the MPA, the MPP, and the MPAff degrees.

The Master of Public Affairs degree is offered at eight campuses accredited by NASPAA, and accounted for eight percent of all degrees awarded by NASPAA institutions in 2005 (NASPAA, 2005). Indiana University and the University of Texas dominate this category. Five Indiana University campuses offer the degree. The curriculum seems to blend both a public policy and a management orientation, as suggested by the degree’s five core courses: Public Management, Statistical Analysis for Effective Decision Making, Public Management Economics, Law and Public Affairs, and a capstone course. The University of Texas at Austin tilts a bit more towards management, and requires three core courses in Public Financial Management, Applied Microeconomics for Policy Analysis, and Introduction to Quantitative Analysis. The University of Texas at Dallas and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, by contrast, offer a more standard Master of Public Administration curriculum. Aside from having an unusually diverse degree program, graduate education in public affairs is not easily described.

The Master of Public Policy.

Among the “MPA-related degrees” that emerged during the late 20th century, the Master of Public Policy is most prominent. The field of public policy was

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

birthed in political science departments, perhaps in an effort to fill the void left by public administration programs that were departing to their own schools and departments. The first papers (four of them) on public policy were presented in 1967 at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, and, by 1970, public policy had its own section at the conference. In 1971, the Policy Studies Organization was founded as the first public policy association, and, by the end of the decade, it boasted 1,100 members — with almost seven out of 10 being political scientists (Hansen, 1983, pp. 218, 219, 239).

Analyzing 18 of the top MPP programs identified by *U.S. News & World Report* showed that they largely eschewed core courses in human resources management, information technology, and organization theory, and instead favored policy evaluation, microeconomics, and decision-making. These three subjects accounted for 60 percent or more of the typical MPP core curriculum. The other major distinction of MPP programs is that they offer an array of specialized and optional courses on the substance of particular policies, such as the environment, energy, or justice, and they also provide more specialization tracks than MPA programs do (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, pp. 21, 7).

Apart from these distinctions, however, MPP curricula at the top schools are akin to their MPA counterparts. The second tier of core MPP courses includes budgeting and finance, public administration, and politics and legal institutions. Each of these courses accounts for 50 percent of the typical MPP curriculum (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, p. 21).

The top MPA programs are about four times more likely to be accredited by NASPAA (80 percent of the top MPA programs are accredited) than are the top MPP programs (22 percent) (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, p. 7). We cannot, and should not, know whether these MPP programs sought accreditation and failed to receive it, or simply did not seek any accreditation. Given the high quality of the universities in which these programs are found, however, the latter seems likely. This apparent disinterest among public-policy schools in attaining NASPAA accreditation may reflect a corresponding disinterest in being identified with public administration.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

APPENDIX B. RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

The members of the Task Force believe that, in addition to a much-needed conversation about the differences that should exist between the various degrees related to public administration, there also are action steps that the President of ASPA may wish to set in motion immediately. We wanted these to be transmitted initially to President White alone, rather than being a part of the public conversation.

1. In addition to appropriate course content of a skill- or technique-based nature, the MPA degree should incorporate required coursework that stresses the constitutional and legal foundations of public administration, and raises awareness about the need for public administrators to interpret their delegated authority so it is in keeping with the separation of and overlapping of powers found in the U.S. and state constitutions.
2. Master's programs, under prompting and guidance from NASPAA, should be clearly labeled, described, and advertised in all publications and advertisements. It is misleading and is also a disservice to students, graduates, employers, and the public interest to do otherwise. ASPA should also follow such a standard for advertisements appearing in the *PA Times*.
3. Content emphases in MPA specialty tracks should not displace needed core courses for government service. They should be labeled as relevant or acceptable electives, not as requirements, and should be so treated in students' program plans and by NASPAA in the accreditation process.
4. The public administration professoriate should be urged to include experiential learning in its courses, and be cautioned not to overload courses with personal research interests. This recommendation is not meant to criticize the lecture-discussion method of instruction, but instead is intended to underline the need for faculty to bring the "real world" into the MPA classroom as much as possible in required courses, and to use their own research as it is pertinent, or as it reinforces learning the course requirements.
5. The American Society for Public Administration should utilize this report to take the lead in calling for a field-wide discussion among major national organizations concerned with public administration and public administrators. The aim would be to have the field's principal associations issue a joint statement on how best to achieve the level of excellence in MPA education to which this report aspires.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

6. While NASPAA rather than ASPA conducts accreditation for the MPA, if NASPAA feels it cannot or will not participate in this discussion — or change its accreditation requirements — then ASPA should consider a means of providing recognition for programs that meet its requirements in MPA program structure, perhaps by publishing a list of approved programs. Clearly, this is not the most desirable course of action, and should be considered only if NASPAA cannot or will not help in this endeavor.
7. Because of the term limitation on the ASPA presidency, the sitting president might wish to consider opening discussions on this report and its recommendations with current candidates for the presidency. Clearly, the needed changes will require an effort that exceeds more than one presidential term.

Nicholas Henry is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and has served on the National Council of ASPA, the Executive Council of NASPAA, and as president of Pi Alpha Alpha. He has been a practitioner of public administration, and received a Resolution of Recognition and Commendation from the Georgia State Senate, as well as a Special Commendation from the Governor of Arizona for his administrative work. He is a student of both public administration and public policy. His academic contributions to public administration include *Public Administration and Public Affairs* (Prentice-Hall), now in its 11th edition and nearing its fourth decade of publication. Henry is the recipient of the Laverne Burchfield Award from *Public Administration Review* and the Edwin O. Stene Award from the *American Review of Public Administration*. His efforts in public policy analysis include authoring seven books on public policy for information technology, and receiving the Author of the Year Award for two articles on this topic that were published in *Science*.

Charles T. Goodsell is Emeritus Professor of Public Administration at Virginia Tech. He has authored publications on various aspects of bureaucracy, political economy, public policy, and public architecture over a period of four decades. He is a former member of the NASPAA Council and has founded two MPA programs. His current project is a book to be called *Mission Mystique: Belief Systems in Public Agencies*, which advances a normative theory of public administration based, not on a model of efficient economic production, but on one of robust and adaptable institutional life.

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration: The Report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration

Laurence E. Lynn, Jr. is the Sid Richardson Research Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, and the Sydney Stein Jr. Professor of Public Management Emeritus at the University of Chicago. His most recent book is *Public Management: A Three-Dimensional Approach*, co-authored with Carolyn J. Hill. For lifetime contributions to public administration research and practice, he has received the John Gaus, Dwight Waldo, Paul Van Riper, and H. George Frederickson awards.

Camilla Stivers is a distinguished professor emeritus at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University. Her most recent book is *Governance in Dark Times: Practical Philosophy for Public Service* (2008).

Gary L. Wamsley is a Professor Emeritus of the School of Public and International Affairs, and was the founder of the Center for Public Administration and Policy at Virginia Tech University. After earning a B.A. and M.A. at UCLA, he completed a Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. In his long career he has been an Air Force Officer, a Budget Analyst, an academic administrator for 15 years, and editor of the journal *Administration & Society* for more than 30 years. His fields of interest include public administration theory, budgeting, national security policy, and emergency management.

He is perhaps best known academically for his part in developing the “Refounding” school of thought in public administration theory. He directed Congressionally mandated studies of military manpower policy for President Carter’s Presidential Re-organization Project and the National Academy of Public Administration’s 1993 study of emergency management, and its 1997 study of the National Guard’s role in emergency preparedness and response. Wamsley was elected to the National Academy of Public Administration in 1998.