University of Montana
Site Visit Report
2018-19 Cohort

Site Visit Report

Draft Management

- Check the "Make Report Visible To School And COPRA (Draft Ready)" box when you are ready for the report to be viewed externally.

- Do not click the "Submit and Lock Site Visit Report" button until you are completely finished with the report; you will no longer be able to edit the report after this button is checked and the report is saved.

Make Report Visible To School And COPRA (Draft Ready)   Yes

Submit and Lock Site Visit Report   Yes

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION:

1. List Members of site visit team, with Title and University
2. Dates of the site visit
3. Upload of Site Visit Schedule

Names of Site Visit Team

███████████████████████████, Chair of SVT

███████████████████████████████████

███████████████ cademic Member

██████████████████████████, Practitioner Member

Site Visit Start Date   02/24/2019

Site Visit End Date   02/26/2019

Site Visit Schedule   [Download]

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND AND MISSION

In Section 2, The Site Visit Team should indicate whether the program's mission and related activities are appropriate for providing professional education for leadership in public service. The Site Visit Team should provide COPRA with information about the particular mission of the program, the general approach to carrying out that mission, and the procedures for periodic self-evaluation and planning relating to the program's Universal Competencies. The Site Visit Team should provide COPRA with information on the program's progress on the Universal Competencies they did not choose to discuss in their Self-Study report as well as their Mission Specific Required and Elective Competencies.

(Due to the online nature of the format and to reduce on redundancy, SVTs will be asked to comment on Standards 1 and 5 in Section 2 and provide any information they would have under Section 3 in this section.)

Instructions:

For each Standard (in either Section 2 or Section 3) the Site Visit Team will check the appropriate box (Cited by COPRA; Cited by SVT; Have Concerns; Have No Concerns). Site Visitors are required to provide information in the text boxes below each Standard regarding any Standard that is cited by COPRA in the Interim Report. The SVT may have concerns regarding a Standard that were not cited by COPRA, if this is the case the SVT should indicate they have a concern with the Standard and provide information to COPRA regarding their concern. (If there is a Standard not cited by COPRA and the program has no concerns with the Standard the SVT does not need to provide any commentary in the text box but should check the Have No Concerns box).

State the program's Mission

The mission of the MPA program at the University of Montana is: "To prepare pre-career and mid-career professionals for dynamic and impactful work in the public and nonprofit sectors by developing a core set of skills, scholarly knowledge, applied, and basic research."
The program identifies as its core public service values: "integrity, ethical conduct, serving the public interest, fairness, accountability, and transparency in public service."

The vision the faculty have identified for the MPA program is that it will be distinctive in the following

ways:
1. Lead the state of Montana in public & nonprofit administration education and faculty research.
2. Leverage our faculty expertise and 38-year joint degree in law and public administration to offer premier expertise and learning experiences in nonprofit administration, public policy, environmental policy, and tribal governance.
3. Prepare the next generation of public servants in the Rocky Mountain West and beyond through the Max S. Baucus Institute.

The SVT confirmed that the mission and the full range of program activities are designed to support professional public service education. While the mission statement itself is relatively generic and could apply to many MPA programs, the vision for the program begins to highlight the unique strengths of the program that distinguish it from others.

Standard 1. Managing the Program Strategically

1.1 Mission Statement: The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including

- Its purpose and public service values, given the program's particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy
- The population of students, employers, and professionals the Program intends to serve, and
- The contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.

| **Standard 1.1 Status** | Cited by COPRA
Have No Concerns |
| --- | --- |
| **Standard 1.1 Comments** | |

COPRA identified two concerns in the Interim Report:

Item 1. The Commission notes that the program describes its mission review process as engaging faculty, alumni, students, and the university, but requests additional information regarding the process that was used in recent and ongoing evaluation of the mission statement. The Commission requests that the Site Visit Team explore this issue with the program, paying particular attention to how the program engages external stakeholders in the process. The program notes that it engages students and alumni, but does not elaborate on how it ensures that its mission and goals remain responsive to its larger community. The Commission seeks evidence that the program defines and pursues a mission that benefits its community and the field.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 1-2), the Program described a three-year cycle for mission review which was last completed in 2016-17,and is scheduled to begin again in fall 2019. Before the visit, the SVT was concerned that the process described suggests that the process relies exclusively on the MPA Director and nucleus faculty to determine if mission changes are required. Other stakeholders seem to only be involved if and when the faculty determine a mission change is necessary.

The SVT spoke with the MPA Director, the MPA faculty (nucleus and adjunct), the alumni council, and other alumni and community partners. The SVT was able to confirm that the program regularly engages stakeholders in all stages of the process and has a formal plan in place to continue to do so. Results of the exit survey and meetings of the alumni council inform the faculty as they consider whether the mission statement needs to be revised. As part of the three-year mission review and assessment cycle, the program faculty will evaluate the mission statement at their annual retreat in August 2019, and will then advance through a strategic planning process and the steps outlined in their assessment plan for securing feedback and input from various stakeholders before adopting any changes. In preparation for beginning this cycle in the coming year, the program has already performed a SWOT analysis. The SVT was provided with the results of the SWOT analysis, which reinforced our observations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and the opportunities and threats facing it.

Item 2. The Commission notes that the program defines its public service values as "the need for integrity, ethical conduct, serving the public interest, fairness, accountability, and transparency in public service", elaborating on how they are emphasized in courses, and the Commission requests the program provide additional information about its public service values, and their link to the mission statement. The discussion of public service values focuses primarily on the core curriculum - how does the program operationalize its values across all aspects of program delivery?

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 2-5), the Program provides a detailed description of several other ways in which the public service values are incorporated into the curriculum (in the NP concentration, internships, summer Indian program opportunities) as well as in the broader student experience (mentorship program, applied learning experiences). The Program also provided information on various assessment tools that evaluate students' competencies on the public service values.

The SVT team noted that, in the Response to the Interim Report, the program documented a series of additional ways in which the public service values guide their student-focused aspects of the program (curriculum, internships, student services, extracurricular activities), but said nothing of how the values guide other aspects of strategic program management (governance, faculty, resources or communications). The SVT spoke with the MPA Director ███████, all MPA nucleus faculty (██████████████████████████) and two of the three adjuncts (█████████████), as well as students, alumni and support staff in the Baucus Institute, the Law School and the University. We confirmed that the mission and the core public service values are integrated throughout all aspects of the program and guide evaluations in all aspects of program performance. Professor ██████ provided us with additional documentation in support of what we learned through conversations (please see the Addendum provided along with the SVT Report).

As noted in the Recommendations section, the SVT found evidence that a more distinctive program mission (and thus a corresponding set of more distinctive learning outcomes and other program evaluation criteria) could be applied to call attention to and leverage the unique strengths of the MPA program at the University of Montana. That said, the evidence shows that the existing mission statement was developed through a process that engaged stakeholders and it is used to guide program decisions and evaluate program effectiveness.

1.2 Performance Expectations: The Program will establish observable program goals, objectives and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.

Standard 1.2 Status	Have No Concerns

Standard 1.2 Comments

The SVT spoke with the MPA Director, MPA faculty, the Baucus Institute Director, the Dean of the Law School, the Vice-Provost, Provost, and President. We reviewed documents used in faculty evaluations, peer observations of teaching, and assessments of student learning. As part of the move to the Law School, the MPA program faculty have had the opportunity to establish and apply their own performance expectations and criteria regarding teaching, research and service. The MPA program is recognized by university administrators as a leader on campus in assessment of learning and strategic program management.

1.3 Program Evaluation: The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program's mission and the Program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.

Standard 1.3 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns

Standard 1.3 Comments

Item 3.
The program identifies three goals derived from its mission statement (stated above):
1. Prepare students for public and nonprofit sector careers.
2. Provide students with applied learning experiences to connect theory and practice.

3. Faculty conduct research to increase scholarly knowledge for the discipline and applied experiences for our students.

The self-study report provides broad explanations of how the program implements these goals, as well as activities tied to goals (for example, internships, curriculum, mentorship program).

The Commission requests the program elaborate on its systematic approach to program evaluation. The logic model indicates a relationship between goals, outputs, and outcomes, outside of student learning, but the narrative focuses primarily on activities associated with different potential measures, as well as student learning assessment. The program should provide additional information on how it has operationalized measures to support program evaluation of its mission and goals. For example, how does it apply its logic model to program assessment? The Commission seeks evidence of how all measures consistently guide the evolution of the program's mission, delivery, and continuous improvement.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 5-8), the program provides a table of eight aspects of the program that are assessed, along with a description of the assessment activities, how results are analyzed, and what actions have been taken based on the results.

Before the visit, the SVT observed that the table included in the response to the IR provides a series of examples of program level evaluation as it relates to the mission, cultural awareness and inclusion, teaching effectiveness, faculty productivity, recruitment and admissions, internships, career counseling and job placement, and learning outcomes/competencies. Absent from the table are references to assessing governance arrangements, resources, or communications. The table primarily focuses on aspects of Standards 3, 4 and 5, but does not fully address all aspects of the logic model (inputs, strategies/activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts) as they relate to governance, resources, communication. As such, we focused on asking questions and gathering information to determine whether the mission and the logic model guide all aspects of the program. Through our conversations with Professor ███████, we were able to determine that the program is doing considerably more than they had documented in their SSR. We were provided with evidence that mechanisms are in place to gather information about all aspects of the program and use the data to guide program improvements (please refer to the Addendum to the SVT Report). There is evidence that the changes have been made in a variety of areas based on a formal and systematic program evaluation.

The recent changes to the institutional arrangements/governance structures are perhaps the best example of the program making strategic decisions in support of the mission. The move to the Law School and the MOU regarding administrative and financial relations was in large part in response to the inadequacy of the prior institutional arrangements (in terms of governance and resources) to support the MPA program in achieving its mission. The current standards for faculty performance in teaching, research and service ensure that all faculty are contributing to the mission. Improvements to the recruitment, admissions, advising and career counseling/placement processes are linked to program evaluation results. And changes to the website were designed to better advance the program's value of transparency.

The SVT found numerous examples of the application of the mission, public service values and the logic model to program decisions, albeit in many instances not fully documented in the SSR or the Response to the IR. It was evident to the SVT that the program faculty are not simply going through the motions of program assessment for the purposes of accreditation review, but rather are conscientiously and enthusiastically engaging in strategic program evaluation and management. As noted above, the SVT Report Addendum documents some of this evidence.

Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning - PART A

5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the Program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and (to) public service values. The required competencies will include five domains - the ability:

-To lead and manage in public governance;
-To participate in and contribute to the public policy process

-To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
-To articulate and apply a public service perspective;
-To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating to how the program has operationally defined each of the universal required competencies and their relationship to the program's mission.

Standard 5.1 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns
Standard 5.1 Comments	

Item 10. In the self-study report, the program chooses to discuss the first universal required competency, which it assesses through two core course artifacts against a rubric. The program found "In our analysis of the aforementioned artifacts, it demonstrated the need for our faculty to provide additional opportunities for our students to apply theory to practice (e.g. use a specific budget to make stronger connections). The MPA Director works with the faculty member teaching this course to design additional applied learning opportunities."

The Commission requests the program elaborate on how it has closed the loop with regard to the first universal required competency. The narrative notes that the faculty member teaching the courses used for assessment will include additional applied learning opportunities - how has this been implemented? How were these opportunities identified from the data collected? How does the program anticipate they will contribute to overall student learning improvement? The Site Visit Team should seek to clarify what artifacts were included in the assessment and how the assignment and its analysis link to the student learning objectives measured.

The Commission further requests additional information regarding the program's approach to student learning assessment. Given the self-study notes that the self-study year marked the first year of implementing competency- based assessment, the program should elaborate on the development and implementation of its processes. For instance, while the program provides appendices showing 2017-18 assessment, the Commission also expects a detailed, concrete plan for implementation of a long-term, sustainable assessment enterprise, appropriate for the program's mission, goals, and structure. A successful program should discuss and document its assessment development and provide an assessment plan, which includes the strategies underlining the assessment of student learning outcomes, as well as its approach to programmatic improvement. The assessment plan should further detail direct (and indirect, as needed) measures, the use of rubrics for evaluation, faculty and stakeholder involvement, analysis procedures, and how analysis is used for overall program improvement.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 16-17), the Program provided more information on the assessment cycle for competencies. The program also attached copies of assessment tools (see pages 22-28), including the Service Learning Survey Questionnaire, and the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 Universal Competency Course Assessment data.

The SVT was initally confused by the rating scales and asked to see the rubrics with criteria used to determine the ratings and the "raw data". The 40-point scale used by the program was not intuitive (and in our recommendations we suggest the program consider using a 10- or 100-point scale), but with some assistance we were able to understand how the individual artifacts are being assessed, how the assessment results are aggregated and reviewed, and what changes have been made based on the results of the assessment. We reviewed the rubrics and their application to class artifacts and the final portfolios. We spoke with faculty about their use of the rubrics and how the results of the assessments have been discussed and used to guide decisions regarding new faculty hires, course content, etc.

5.2 Mission-specific Required Competencies: The program will identify core competencies in other domains that are necessary and appropriate to implement its mission.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating to how the program has operationally defined each of their mission-specific required competencies and their relationship to the program's mission (if applicable).

Standard 5.2 Status	Have No Concerns

Standard 5.2 Comments

Not applicable

5.3 Mission-specific Elective Competencies: The program will define its objectives and competencies for optional concentrations and specializations.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns relating how the program has operationally defined each of their mission-specific elective competencies and their relationship to the program's mission (if applicable).

Standard 5.3 Status   Have No Concerns

Standard 5.3 Comments

In its Response to the Interim Report (see page 29), the Program provided two rubrics used to assess competencies within the Nonprofit Concentration and a plan to assess the elective competencies on a three-year cycle. The SVT team had questions about the scoring system used within these rubrics that were clarified in conversations with the faculty. The program is well-positioned to implement assessment of the NP concentration according to their formal assessment plan and will begin doing so at the end of the spring 2019 semester.

5.4 Professional Competency: The Program will ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.

Standard 5.4 Status   Have No Concerns

Standard 5.4 Comments

This is one of the noteworthy strengths of the MPA program at Montana. The SVT spoke with nucleus and adjunct faculty, current students, alumni and community partners. The SVT was also provided with access to and reviewed several online courses. The SVT observed that the program provides students with extensive opportunities to interact with professionals and to develop their professional competencies. We repeatedly heard and saw evidence that Montana is a very large small town. Through the professional networks of Professors ███████████████████████ , supplemented by those of the Law School and the Baucus Institute, MPA students interact directly with local, state, national and tribal leaders in the state. Most of the MPA students are mid-career students, and pre-career students complete an internship. All students have the opportunity to have a professional mentor, and according to both the students and the mentors, the matching is individually tailored and the relationships which develop are highly engaged, mutually beneficial and continue beyond the students' time in the program.

Standard 5.1-3 PART B: Stage of Assessment

The Site Visit Team should review in the program's SSR where the program indicated it thought it was in the stages of assessment for each competency. The Site Visit Team for this Standard should indicate after its review of the program's assessment practices where the SVT thinks the program is in the stages of assessment. Where the SVT differs from the program self analysis the team should provide information in the text box below on why they think the program is either further along or not as far as the program itself indicated.

Competency	Learning outcome has been defined	Evidence of learning has been gathered	Evidence of learning has been analyzed	Any Evidence used to make programmatic decisions	List what required courses cover this competency
1. To lead and manage in public governance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Competency	Learning outcome has been defined	Evidence of learning has been gathered	Evidence of learning has been analyzed	Any Evidence used to make programmatic decisions	List what required courses cover this competency
2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable	No	No	No	No	No
7. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable	No	No	No	No	No
8. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable	No	No	No	No	No
9. Mission Specific Required Competency if applicable	No	No	No	No	No

Standard 5.1-3 PART B: Stage of Assessment Comments

The SVT reviewed the documents that were evaluated as part of course-level and program-level

assessments, the rubrics used to assess them according to the competency-linked indicators, the aggregate data, the conclusions drawn, and evidence of programmatic changes. For each of the competencies, the rubrics are used to assess select artifacts from specific required courses for a random sample of 10 students in each cycle. In addition to the course-level assessments, the program uses rubrics to assess the students' final portfolios.

Standard 5.1-3 Part C: One Assessment Cycle

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle of the one universal required competency the program chose to highlight.

The SVT confirmed through document review and conversations with faculty that the program has completed a full assessment cycle for four of the five universal required competencies. The program delayed assessment on universal competency 3 ("to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions") while they made some changes to the curriculum (to add a research methods course requirement) and while they made faculty changes (hiring a new faculty member to teach research methods and budgeting).

The program gathers data from a graduating student survey, an internship supervisor survey, assessments of the universal competencies using rubrics applied to select artifacts from a random sample of students in certain required classes, a pre- and post-test, and a portfolio/exit survey.

The SVT concurs with the opinion expressed by the Vice Provost that the MPA program faculty are conscientiously and enthusiastically embracing assessment of learning as a way of improving their teaching.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle o the one mission-specific rquired competency the program chose to highlight (if applicable).

Not applicable.

The SVT in this section should comment on any concerns of the completed assessment cycle of the one mission-specific elective competency the program chose to highlight (if applicable).

The program faculty have defined the competencies for the Nonprofit Administration track, identified multiple indicators, and developed a rubric. They have not yet completed a full cycle. The SVT did hear from a small number of former and current students that the courses in the nonprofit track are not as rigorous as those in the MPA core. Although these criticisms are not reflected in the course evaluations or the program's yearly review of exit surveys, the concerns were described to the SVT in similar terms by students and alumni in separate meetings and in response to a general question about areas where the program could be improved. As such, the program is encouraged to be attentive to that when they complete their assessments, and to evaluate whether the add-on assignments for graduate students are sufficient to distinguish the nonprofit administration courses from their roots in a professional development/continuing education model.

To lead and manage in public governance

The program defines this Universal Competency as "Demonstrating an understanding of how leadership and management models and theories link to organizational practices."

The Program uses a rubric to evaluate students on the following indicators:
1. Analyzes organizational structures using appropriate theories and concepts
2. Understands how internal and external factors influence organizational behavior and management
3. Understand how leadership and management theories link to organizational practices

The Program also collects data in the Exit Interview with the following question(s):
My UM MPA education has provided me with theoretical knowledge that will further my professional career.

My UM MPA education has provided me with practical skills that will further my career goals.
My MPA degree has made me feel more comfortable leading and managing in the public sector

The program also evaluates this competency in the final student portfolio. The SVT confirmed that the program has closed the loop and completed a full assessment cycle.

To participate in and contribute to the public policy process

The program defines this Universal Competency as "Demonstrating an ability to analyze policy and craft policy options to address public problems"

The Program uses a rubric to evaluate students on the following indicators:
1. Demonstrate an ability to analyze and craft policy options to address public problems
2. Formulates options that rely on various policy instruments to address a problem.
3. Identifies options that are feasible and reflect an in-depth understanding of the policy problem (e.g. ability to identify stakeholders and connect policy options to stakeholder interests)

The Program also collects data in the Exit Interview with the following question(s):
The UM MPA Program assisted me in developing my writing skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my research skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my oral communication skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my analytical and critical thinking skills.
My MPA degree has enhanced my ability to participate in public policy processes
My MPA degree has enhanced my ability to think critically and construct solutions for public problems

The program also evaluates this competency in the final student portfolio. The SVT confirmed that the program has closed the loop and completed a full assessment cycle.

To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions

The Program defines this as "having the skills necessary to effectively analyze problems and make decisions"

This is operationalized as (but has not yet been measured):
1. Demonstrate an ability to utilize analytical tools to analyze, present, and interpret data and apply to informing organizational/policy decisions
2. interpret qualitative and quantitative data and use these data to frame problems and identify possible cause and effect relationships
3. recommend a course of action supported by data and analysis rather than personal opinion

The Program also collects data in the Exit Interview with the following question(s):
The UM MPA Program assisted me in developing my writing skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my research skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my oral communication skills.
The UM MPA program assisted me in developing my analytical and critical thinking skills.
My MPA degree has enhanced my ability to think critically and construct solutions for public problems

The program has not yet completed a full cycle of assessment on this competency, but it will be assessed beginning in spring 2019. The delays were due to changes in faculty and coursework most directly linked to this competency. That is, the faculty made a conscious decision to wait until curriculum was revised to include a mandatory research methods course and a new faculty member was hired to teach budgeting class before assessing student learning on this competency.

To articulate and apply a public service perspective

The program defines this Universal Competency as "Demonstrates an ability to articulate the perspective of the public sector and its role in serving the public's interest."

The Program uses a rubric to evaluate students on the following indicators:

1. Communicate the value of the public service to a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
2. Counter common critiques of the bureaucracy by explaining the role of the public sector.
3. Convey an understanding of the complexities associated with public service today and their implications.

The program also evaluates this competency in the final student portfolio. The SVT confirmed that the program has closed the loop and completed a full assessment cycle.

To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

The program defines this Universal Competency as "1) Demonstrating an understanding of the benefits of workforce diversity to organizational success in serving a diverse and changing citizenry; and an ability to communicate the management strategies needed to create a diverse organization; 2) Demonstrating an ability, or an understanding of how, to interact with diverse perspectives in setting organizational policies and overcoming diversity-related challenges."

The Program uses a rubric to evaluate students on the following indicators:
1. Demonstrates the ability to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse workforce
2. Identifies and explains links between representative diversity and effective service to diverse and changing communities by drawing from theoretical and empirical literatures
3. Demonstrates a broad understanding of, and commitment to, the variety of manifestations of diversity, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, religion, sexuality, etc.

The Program also collects data in the Exit Interview with the following question(s):
My MPA degree has made me more proficient in communicating with a diverse and changing workforce
My MPA degree has enhanced my ability to think critically and construct solutions for public problems

The program also evaluates this competency in the final student portfolio. The SVT confirmed that the program has closed the loop and completed a full assessment cycle.

Section 3 Standard By Standard Analysis

SECTION 3 STANDARD BY STANDARD ANALYSIS
Each item raised by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation in its interim report to the program should be addressed in detail. The Site Visit Team should report the facts relevant to the questions raised by the Commission and provide an analysis of the program's relative performance with respect to the standard cited in each item. This assessment should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program's performance with respect to the standard in question. However, the Site Visit Team should not reach final conclusions concerning conformity versus non-conformity with respect to the item and standard in question. Final decisions on conformity versus non-conformity should be made by the Commission based on clear assessments from the Site Visit Team.

In addition to addressing the concerns raised in the interim report, the Site Visit Team should here present its evaluation of the program's performance on any of the standards not specifically mentioned by the Commission that have risen to a point of concern for the team. The team in its report will indicate if a Standard not cited by COPRA has risen to a level of concern and provide information and facts to COPRA as to why the Site Visit Team feels this way. While evaluation and interpretation of "the facts" will be necessary and important, the Site Visit Team should **not reach final conclusions concerning conformity versus non-conformity with respect to the standard in question**. Final decisions on conformity versus non-conformity should be made by the Commission based on clear assessment from the Site Visit Team.

Standard 2. Matching Governance with the Mission

2.1 Administrative Capacity: The program will have an administrative infrastructure appropriate for its mission, goals, and objectives in all delivery modalities employed.

Standard 2.1 Status	Cited by COPRA
	Have No Concerns
Standard 2.1 Comments	

Item 4: Standard 2.1 - Administrative Capacity/Standard 2.2 - Faculty Governance

Standard 2.1 states, "The program will have an administrative infrastructure appropriate for its mission, goals, and objectives in all delivery modalities employed." Standard 2.2 states, "An adequate faculty nucleus-at least five (5) full-time faculty members or their equivalent-will exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program."

The self-study report states,
Until 2018, the MPA program resided in the Department of Political Science in the College of Humanities and Sciences. The MPA program accounted for approximately 95% of the Department's graduate enrollment and almost 100% of the Department's online revenue. MPA faculty carried a substantial undergraduate teaching load while also relying on adjuncts to round out the MPA core curriculum. Within the Department, the MPA Director lacked substantial determining influence in instructional and budgetary decisions. The Political Science Department exerted a significant draw on the program's instructional and fiscal resources without providing reciprocal levels of support. As a result, in Summer 2017 the University of Montana undertook an extensive program-level evaluation across the campus. Each program informed campus administration about enrollment, student credit hours, graduation rates, teaching loads, faculty productivity, alignment with long-term strategic planning, and student support. Through this process, the campus administration recognized that in order for the MPA program to best serve its students and it mission well into the future, a new structure was necessary.

The program continues,
Relocating the MPA program physically and administratively within the Baucus Institute helps to attain our mission and provide autonomy to exert substantial influence over our program to:
1. Allow the MPA Director substantial influence over budget and curricular decision-making.
2. Enhance mission orientation - provide public sector professionals a space with a shared vision (Baucus Institute/Public Service) a space for students and faculty to excel long-term (e.g. faculty exchanges in China, collaborative opportunities to conduct research important for the future of the public sector).
3. Become regionally distinctive due to the Institute's commitment to applied learning experiences and public sector careers. For example, the MPA program through the Baucus Institute sent two MPA students to Washington D.C. to work as Baucus Leader Fellows in U.S. Senate policy work. Moreover, the Baucus Institute affords the MPA program increased ways to diversify curriculum through a study abroad program in China.

Importantly, the campus administration is committed to the long-term success of the MPA program and its autonomy. The administration has initiated a reorganization process with the goal of reconstituting the MPA program as the Department of Public Administration and Policy in the School of Law in Spring 2019.

The Commission seeks additional information about the program's new governance structure and its sustainability, importantly that the new administrative and governance infrastructures match the program's mission and delivery, and ensure the integrity of the program. Given there have been administrative changes at the institution, it is not clear whether the current governance arrangement is dependent upon the leadership of the university or if this structural change's rationale is compelling enough to sustain leadership changes. The Site Visit Team should seek to understand how the program operates within the law school, especially with regard to governance issues such as tenure and promotion and substantial determining influence. For example, where the faculty's tenure lines are housed departmentally. Will Law School faculty vote on the tenure and promotion of MPA faculty? How are the faculty integrated into their home departments, if they are not housed in the law school? The program signals this change will advance program influence - how is that now institutionalized?

Further, given the rationale provided for why the governance arrangement of the MPA has shifted, the Site Visit Team should seek to understand the permanency of this arrangement and the process used to identify the current arrangement and what standards were used in determining the appropriate location of the program. In addition, any plans for evaluating the success of this change should be examined in depth with the program's faculty and administration.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 8-11), the Program further emphasized that the

move has been a very positive one for the MPA program. The program also attached a letter from Dean ███ and a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Financial Relationship Between Blewett School of Law and Master of Public Administration Program (pages 19-20, and 21, respectively of the Response to the Interim Report)

Regarding standard 2.1, the SVT spoke with MPA Program Director ████████, Law School Dean ████████ Baucus Institute Director ████████, as well as the following staff members now serving the MPA program:
- ████████ (development director, formally employed by the University of Montana Foundation)
- ████████ (Law School fiscal officer)
- ████████ (Law School director of marketing)
- ████████ (Law School admissions officer)
- ████████ (Law School administrative associate for the MPA program)

████ stated that there was little fundraising for the MPA program while it was still housed in the political science department. This has changed; she and Baucus Institute Director ████████ are actively fundraising with the aim to offer the MPA program the opportunity to enrich the experience for faculty and students. ████ explained incorporating the MPA program's accounts into the Law School's system, which went smoothly. ████ pointed out how the Law School incorporated and enhanced the MPA program's web presence, and showed her amazement that in the MPA program's previous home (political science department), these things were done by faculty. She also noted new activities she is able to do for the MPA program, such as a hooding ceremony on graduation day. ██ explained how she handles the processing of applications for admission. The peak times for MPA and Law School applications are distinct, so her workload is quite evenly spread. ████ is new on the job but already well involved with promotion and communications for the MPA program, as well as event planning. Over time, she will be able to take on more responsibilities, easing the administrative burden on the MPA Director (and soon departmemt chair). All support staff noted the excellent working relationship and open lines of communication they have with MPA Director ████████.

Overall, the SVT finds that the MPA program has a supportive and well-working administrative infrastructure, which is an improvement by leaps and bounds over what the previous situation in the political science department must have been. The Director, ████████, is still heavily involved in administration, but now in a more supervisory role, rather than doing staff tasks herself.

The SVT reviewed the MPA program's budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year and confirmed that administrative support is covered by the Law School.

The SVT observed an atmosphere of collegiality and open communication between the leading faculty in the MPA program and the administrative staff. The newest staff member, ████████, is overqualified (she has a Master's degree in publishing) and shows a lot of initiative. The MPA Director is interested in helping her to develop more and take on a bigger role in the future, perhaps including teaching in the nonprofit area.

The SVT would like to provide assurances to COPRA that there is every indication that the move to the Law School was at the request of the MPA Director and with the support of the MPA faculty and in an effort to allow the program to more fully pursue and achieve its mission. The Blewett School of Law is not a conventional law school, but rather one that emphasizes public service, thus there are many synergies within the current institutional arrangement. All evidence suggests the MPA faculty and students are better served (with more autonomy, more tangible resources, a more supportive environment, and greater potential for recognized excellence) with the arrangement they have with the Baucus Institute and the Law School. In many respects, the SVT found this to be a promising model that addresses weaknesses in many MPA programs' teaching of students about the law.

Within 2 weeks of the Site Visit, and before submission of the SVT Report, the University's Board of Regents approved the creation of a Department of Public Administration and Policy within the Law School. As such the MPA program is now housed within an academic department. Currently the MPA program is the only degree program in the Department, however there are plans to develop an undergraduate program in nonprofit management (see Addendum for documentation from the Board of Regents).

2.2 Faculty Governance: An adequate faculty nucleus - at least five (5) full-time faculty members or their equivalent - will exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program.

Standard 2.2 Status	Cited by COPRA
	Have No Concerns

Standard 2.2 Comments

Item 4 (continued) Please see section 2.1 above for the language from the Interim Report as COPRA grouped these two standards together

The SVT spoke with all MPA faculty, the Dean of the Law School ▮▮▮▮▮▮, Provost ▮▮▮▮▮▮, University of Montana President ▮▮▮▮▮▮, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs ▮▮▮▮▮▮. There is universal support among all stakeholders for the MPA program's new home in the Law School, which everyone expects to be formalized with the final approval of the new Department of Public Administration and Policy (DPAP henceforth) at the Board of Regents meeting on March 8, 2019. This is not a temporary situation, but is understood and welcomed by all parties as a permanent move.

The MPA Program Director (and designated department chair) ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and Dean ▮▮▮▮▮▮ confirmed that all MPA tenure-track and tenured lines will be housed within DPAP. With the exception of the MPA nucleus faculty who are from the Law School (▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮), other faculty in the Law School will not vote on DPAP tenure or promotion cases. The MPA core faculty are formally involved in Law School-wide governance, and there is a regular meeting of the whole Law School once per semester. The MPA faculty designed their own evaluation process (documented in their response to COPRA's interim report and confirmed to the SVT during our conversations).

The SVT can confirm that the whole MPA faculty, as well as the Law School faculty and leadership were involved in determining the MPA program's new home and are enthusiastic about it. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement, supported by the leadership of the university (incl. President, Provost, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs) as well as the MPA Alumni Council and stakeholders in the community such as senior officials at Missoula County, the Mayor of Missoula, the state's Attorney General (an MPA alum), and retired Senator/Ambassador Max Baucus. The program has long had a strong connection to the Law School, and students have benefited from the comparatively deep exposure to law they receive in this program. The Law School has long had a practice-oriented focus, which makes it a strong fit to the MPA program.

The SVT got a strong sense that the new home for the MPA program is a permanent arrangement creating many new opportunities for the program to distinguish itself and develop a more focused mission (see standard 1 above and recommendations below).

To determine the success of the new structural arrangements, the program will be continuing its extensive and proactive collection of data, information, and testimonials, to see how student recruitment, the student experience, and graduate career success will be evolving under the new institutional arrangement.

The program reports 6 nucleus MPA faculty (▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮) based on the definition they developed for this purpose. The SVT observes that one of the adjuncts (▮▮▮▮) could be counted as part of the nucleus; he is a full-time employee of the University, he teaches annually in the program, regularly attends meetings, and participates in mentoring students. Two other adjunct faculty (▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮) meet all of the criteria with the exception of full-time status in the University. Given the extensive and ongoing engagement of the three adjuncts (all of whom are MPA alum), the SVT finds that while the program only reports a nucleus of 6 faculty, it is more accurately a team of 9 who are fully engaged with the MPA program.

The program has sufficient faculty to fulfill its mission at its current size, but it cannot expand its reach without additional resources. The MPA program is turning away qualified students because it does not have room in its classes. The MPA faculty are interested in developing an undergraduate minor in Nonprofit Administration as well as pursuing a dual MPA/MPH program, but they do not currently have the resources to do either.

Standard 3 Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance

3.1 Faculty Qualifications: The program's faculty members will be academically or professionally qualified to pursue the program's mission.

Standard 3.1 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns
Standard 3.1 Comments	

Item 5.

The self-study report states, "Professionally qualified: hold at least a master's level degree in their respective area of expertise (e.g. nonprofit administration, public policy, law/policy, public administration) and have professional experience related to their teaching and research; and/or, Academically qualified: hold a terminal degree (EdD, PhD, JD) in their respective area of expertise related to their teaching and research."

The Commission requests the program provide its operationalized policy for academically and professionally qualified faculty. What formal expectations exist for determining faculty qualifications? In practice, how does the program evaluate expertise? How does the program ensure the ongoing currency and expertise of its faculty? The Commission seeks evidence of systematic steps and strategies for, and investment in, individual academically and professionally faculty career development to ensure that faculty members sustain and improve their academic and professional qualifications.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 11-12), the Program provided more detailed information (drawn from the MPA Program Policy Manual) on how the MPA Program defines qualifications which includes reference not only to initial basis but also continuing qualifications. The Program also reports that $1500 is provided to each AQ faculty each year to maintain their credentials and lists the various activities faculty have engaged in during the Fall 2019 semester to ensure that they continue to meet the qualifications.

The SSR simply listed initial qualifications for AQ and PQ faculty and did not reference what is required to demonstrate continued qualifications. In the Response to the IR, the program provided a more detailed policy statement reflecting criteria for determining both initial and on-going qualifications. In keeping with the relatively general and broad mission statement of the program, the AQ and PQ qualifications are relatively standard and undistinctive. As noted in the recommendations, the SVT discussed with the program faculty the opportunity to document the more distinctive expectations linked to the implicit and more distinctive program mission.

The SVT confirmed that as part of the new institutional arrangements, resources have been dedicated to faculty professional development. This comes in the form of research funds for new tenure track faculty and annual travel funds of $1500 for all faculty, as well as program-level decisions about teaching loads.

The SVT notes that the program has an AQ/PQ policy and confirms that all faculty currently teaching in the program meet the program's stated qualifications. The program has a process in place to review faculty performance through observations of teaching, as well as formal reviews for tenure and promotion. The SVT discussed with the program the opportunity to further refine the qualifications if they further differentiate their mission to ensure that the program is able to recruit, retain and recognize those faculty who help advance the unique mission that goes beyond the existing formal mission. In particular we note that every single one of the current faculty is passionate about teaching and community engagement, and dedicated to serving the state of Montana; the students and alumni recognize and appreciate this, and the AQ/PQ policies could help ensure that this characteristic of the program is retained.

3.2 Faculty Diversity: The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and retention of faculty members.

Standard 3.2 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns
Standard 3.2 Comments	

Item 6: Standard 3.2 - Faculty Diversity/Standard 4.4 - Student Diversity (this Item is discussed here and again in Standard 4.4)

Standard 3.2 states, "The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and retention of faculty members." Standard 4.4 states, "The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions practices, and student support services."

The diversity plan was recently adopted by the program faculty in March 2018. Previously, students from the program have been involved in the assessment of issues related to diversity and inclusion, but those activities have not been institutionalized within an annual planning or assessment process. The Site Visit Team should seek to understand how much of the March 2018 diversity plan has been implemented, and whether there are any insights or conclusions drawn from related the data collected thus far. Given the recency of some of the hires, the Site Visit Team should seek to understand how the diversity plan was implemented with regard to the faculty recruitment and hiring processes.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 12-14), the Program lists several ways in which the Diversity Plan has been implemented.

The SVT spoke with faculty, students, alumni, and the University EEOC Director ███████████.
We recognize the challenges facing a program housed in an overwhelmingly white university in an overwhelmingly white state. Recruitment of faculty to represent racial and ethnic diversity has been and will likely continue to be a challenge. In recruiting for the most recent faculty position, they targeted HBCUs and Tribal Colleges but generated no applications from those sources.

The program's Diversity Plan and the actions they have taken to implement it demonstrate a multi-pronged approach to this challenge. First, they are incorporating diversity on the basis of gender, socio-economic status, and first generation college attendees among their faculty. Second, the program employs a Native American leader who is an MPA alum and works at the highest levels of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a regular adjunct and mentor for students (as noted with respect to Standard 3.1, the SVT finds this person to meet all but the full-time status criteria of nucleus faculty). Third, they partner with the Law School, the Baucus Institute, and the Summer Indian Law Program to provide students with opportunities to interact with and learn about Native American law and policy. Fourth, they are recognized by the University President and Provost as a logical partner for the planned Native American Institute and university efforts to build partnerships with the tribal colleges. [Note: Diversity is discussed further in response to standard 4.4].

3.3 Research, Scholarship, and Service: Program faculty members will produce scholarship and engage in professional and community service activities outside of the university appropriate to the program's mission, stage of their careers, and the expectations of their university.

Standard 3.3 Status   Have No Concerns

Standard 3.3 Comments

The SVT was provided with information on the research and service requirements established by the MPA program to determine criteria for AQ/PQ status, and for advancement through tenure and promotion. The criteria relate to the program mission and are within the acceptable range for the University. The SVT confirmed that all faculty are evaluated on and currently meet the program's requirements. The SVT notes that despite a heavier teaching load and higher faculty-student ratio than many other units at the University of Montana, the MPA faculty are productive scholars, they attend and present at academic and professional conferences, and they are heavily engaged in the community.

Standard 4 Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students

4.1 Student Recruitment: The program will have student recruitment practices appropriate for its mission.

Standard 4.1 Status   Have No Concerns

Standard 4.1 Comments

The SVT spoke with MPA Director ███████, Law School Dean ███████, MPA faculty, Baucus Institute Director ███████ and staff, and various current students.

The SVT reviewed the Diversity Plan, MPA Awareness Campaign Materials, press releases, Public Service Academy materials, and scholarship materials.

The SVT observed that the MPA program is one of the very few programs at the University of Montana that has been consistently increasing enrollment. In fact, the program has found it necessary to turn some students away from class enrollment. The program recruits both pre-career and mid-career students in conjunction with its mission.

Many of the pre-career students are recruited from UM undergraduate programs. Mid-career students are recruited from the varied and many governmental and tribal entities throughout Montana and the West. The program markets its success and high rankings through various methods, including press releases, social media advertisements, word of mouth, the Public Service Academy, the "I Heart Bureaucracy" campaign, and Baucus Institute marketing materials.

The program's innovation in the areas of online teaching and robotic attendance at class is a recruitment tool in and of itself. Various members of the Montana MPA community have described Montana as a "large small city" to us. The program's innovative use of robots which permits students throughout the state can attend class "virtually" and be an integral part of this community even if they are an 8-hour drive away is in and of itself a recruiting tool.

The program's relationship with and support by the Baucus Institute and the Law School should lead to yet more recruitment. The Baucus Institute has a high profile within Montana and the District of Columbia both the relationship with the Institute and Law School is very early. However, it is very apparent to the SVT that both are committed to marketing the Institute's and the Law School's connection with the MPA program. The Institute and Law School see their mission as intimately connected with public service and are ecstatic to have the MPA program within their building.

Even before the move to the Law School and relationship with the Baucus Institute has been fully memorialized by the Regents, the program is already receiving more student applications than it can handle. The future challenge will be to provide the program with the necessary resources to continue to grow the program to meet the needs of qualified students who wish to attend the program.

4.2 Student Admissions: The Program will have and apply well-defined admission criteria appropriate for its mission.

Standard 4.2 Status

Cited by COPRA
Have No Concerns

Standard 4.2 Comments

Item 7: Standard 4.2 - Student Admissions

Standard 4.2 states, "The program will have and apply well-defined admission criteria appropriate for its mission."

Table 4.2.2a indicates that of the 50 people admitted in the self-study year, 167 students enrolled. (This misalignment is mirrored in both modalities). The Commission requests the program update its total self-study year enrollment numbers in both modalities to reflect the number of students, of the self-study year admittances, who ultimately enrolled across the year, as well as in the fall.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see page 14), the Program explained that it had misread the requirements, and submitted a new chart.

The SVT spoke with MPA Director ███████, as well as ███████, Admissions Associate. The SVT team reviewed admissions material data. The program's admissions requirements are clear and consistent with the program's mission to educate pre-career and mid-career students. The standards are administrated in a fair and consistent manner. It is the case that the program is receiving more qualified applicants than it can currently serve. It therefore does have to reject some

applications (asking the student to apply later) who would otherwise be admitted.

4.3 Support for Students: The program will ensure the availability of support services, such as curriculum advising, internship placement and supervision, career counseling, and job placement assistance to enable students to succeed or advance in careers in public affairs, administration, and policy.

| **Standard 4.3 Status** | Cited by COPRA |
| | Have No Concerns |

Standard 4.3 Comments

Item 8: Standard 4.3 - Support for Students

Standard 4.3 states, "The program will ensure the availability of support services, such as curriculum advising, internship placement and supervision, career counseling, and job placement assistance to enable students to progress in careers in public affairs, administration, and policy."

Table 4.3.3a indicates that of the 29 students enrolled in both modalities in the self-study year minus five cohort, 20 graduated (69%). The program states, "Student success and retention is of importance for our program. In 2012, it was disconcerting to see that nine students did not successfully complete their degree (see 4.3.3a). This was due in part to low levels of faculty staffing the program. Strides have been made to effectively advise our students to provide support."

The Commission seeks additional information regarding student persistence and graduation. To what strides is the program referring? What strategies has the program implemented to support students to degree, and what impact has the program seen? The Site Visit Team should seek to understand what specific actions and strategies have been identified to ensure students are appropriately supported and are making timely progress toward graduation.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 14-15), the Program emphasized leadership transition, retirements, and the hiring of new faculty. Faculty participated and met to determine what steps needed to be implemented in order to improve persistence to graduation. Eight steps were agreed upon including such things as mandatory orientation, one-on-one advising, better access to the joint JD/MPA professor for joint degree students, an internship coordinator and a mentorship program. Additional information is provided in the Addendum to this SVT Report.

The SVT notes that the list reflects a clear communication with students about expectations and consequences for failure to meet those expectations, but does not address what additional supports are provided to help students be successful.

The SVT spoke with the MPA program director, all core faculty, support staff, and current students.

The SVT reviewed the MPA Advising Checklists, mentoring materials, and internship materials.

The SVT team observed that the completion rate for students has improved in the last few years. This is an effort of the program to institutionalize processes that make sure that students who are provisionally admitted or struggling are not ignored. This has led to better retention. Part of this process is to encourage provisionally admitted students to participate in the mentorship program. However, this is not required.

The SVT observed opportunities for every student to participate in mentorships and internships. Most students are mid-career so internships are not pursued. However, students can and many do take advantage of the mentorship opportunity. Students are paired with mentors, mostly within the Montana community. Students indicated to the SVT that these relationships have been highly beneficial. One student indicated that her mentor has been an invaluable advocate and source of advice. Another student indicated that his mentor relationship has remained consistent throughout his tenure and he fully excepts to continue the relationship even after he graduates and joins the Army.

The SVT observed that ▮▮▮▮▮▮ is the advisor for all general MPA students. When the SVT asked the students how this is manageable for one person, the students were unanimous that ▮▮▮▮ unfailingly responds quickly to any inquiries and reaches out as opportunities are presented. As an

example, one student indicated that she let Dr. ▆▆▆ know she had an interview lined up. Later that evening, Dr. ▆▆▆ had e-mailed her asking if she'd like to set up a practice interview with her. To distribute the workload and to ensure that students receive appropriate specialized advising, Dr. ▆▆▆ advises the JD/MPA students, and Dr. ▆▆▆ advises the nonprofit concentration students.

The program is heavily invested in its online program. The SVT asked the faculty how it keeps proper track of online students' needs and performance. Faculty shared that they meet one-on-one through Zoom with each student prior to the start of the class and also use one-on-one meetings throughout the semester to keep touch with a student, ensuring that he or she is on track. The program has also instituted the practice of holding student conferences in various parts of the state. In December of 2018, Professors ▆▆▆ and ▆▆▆ worked with students to establish the UMMPA (pronounced as if from the Willy Wonka and The Chocolate Factory) chapter of Pi Alpha Alpha .

4.4 Student Diversity: The Program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and admissions practices and student support services.

Standard 4.4 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns
Standard 4.4 Comments	

Item 6: Standard 3.2 - Faculty Diversity/Standard 4.4 - Student Diversity

Standard 3.2 states, "The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and retention of faculty members." Standard 4.4 states, "The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions practices, and student support services."

The diversity plan was recently adopted by the program faculty in March 2018. Previously, students from the program have been involved in the assessment of issues related to diversity and inclusion, but those activities have not been institutionalized within an annual planning or assessment process. The Site Visit Team should seek to understand how much of the March 2018 diversity plan has been implemented, and whether there are any insights or conclusions drawn from related the data collected thus far. Given the recency of some of the hires, the Site Visit Team should seek to understand how the diversity plan was implemented with regard to the faculty recruitment and hiring processes.

Item 9: Standard 4.4 - Student Diversity

Standard 4.4 states, "The program will promote diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions practices, and student support services."

Based on numbers provided earlier in the self-study report, it appears that the student diversity data included in table 4.4.3a is complete (11 students enrolled across 2 years). The program notes that students can opt not to report these data, yet the diversity plan seems to have additional diversity data.

The Commission requests the program clarify these data and how it maintains information on student demographics.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 15-16), the Program

The SVT spoke with MPA Director ▆▆▆, Law School Dean ▆▆▆, Baucus Institute Director ▆▆▆, Provost ▆▆▆ Director of Equal Opportunity ▆▆▆, Legal Director ▆▆▆, and President ▆▆▆

The SVT reviewed the Diversity Plan and the Cultural Awareness Assessment.

The SVT observed a true desire and commitment to increase diversity and cultural awareness on the part of all stakeholders and leaders of the program. The program struggles to increase diversity within the context of a state that is over 90% white.

The SVT was able to review student responses to the cultural awareness survey and discuss with Dr. ████ the knowledge gained by faculty from these responses. The program scored well in all areas. It did learn, however there is still work to be done to ensure that American Indian students are fully represented and empowered in the classroom.

The SVT discussed with the various individuals above what the program could do to interact more comprehensively with the American Indian community in Montana. It seems to be a natural fit with the Law School's expertise in Indian law and the fact that there are various tribal governance structures throughout the state. It was discovered that part of the challenge is the fact that there are multiple tribal colleges throughout Montana. It is not the goal or desire of the MPA program to diminish these programs. As the program is a innovator in the use of technology for long-distance learning, it was determined that the program could explore the possibility of partnering with tribal colleges to offer graduate level curriculum through technology at the tribal college centers. In furtherance of this goal, the program will work with the University's Native American Institute and its new chair.

Additionally, the program is committed to serving students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The state of Montana has a low per capita income and many MPA students are from such a background.

The program has hired an adjunct faculty member, ████████ who currently serves as the Regional Fiduciary Trust Administrator-Rocky Mountain, Pacific, and Alaska regions for the Office of the Special of the Special Trustee for American Indians. Professor ████ has over twenty years of experience in Indian country with both the Federal and tribal governments. Another possibility provided by the program's use of technology, especially robots, is to provide the students with a more diverse set of guest speakers.

The SVT discussed the program's most recent faculty hiring process with Dr. ████. The program did coordinate with the University's Office of Equal Opportunity in conducting its search for qualified candidates. This included reaching out to Historically Black Universities and Colleges as well as every tribal college in Montana. Unfortunately, no minority candidates did apply. As stated above, the program realizes there may be opportunities to coordinate with faculty at some of Montana's tribal colleges in order to ensure that the program's students are encountering diverse voices and perspectives in their education.

While discussing the area of diversity with Baucus Institute Director ████████, he indicated a strong desire of the Institute was to raise sufficient funds to provide scholarship opportunities for diverse students within the Law School and the MPA program. As an example of how this has worked in the past, ████ shared that one gift maker for summer internships in the District of Columbia, stipulated that at least one of these gifts must be shared with a student of American Indian ancestry.

Standard 6. Matching Resources with the Mission

6.1 Resource Adequacy: The program will have sufficient funds, physical facilities, and resources in addition to its faculty to pursue its mission, objectives, and continuous development.

Standard 6.1 Status	Cited by COPRA Have No Concerns
Standard 6.1 Comments	

The self-study report states,
Until recently, our budgetary situation was problematic, but has greatly improved because campus administration has acted to support the long-term stability and health of our program by taking steps to reorganize the program as a department within the School of Law and its Baucus Institute. This short-term gain will provide long-term success. Although our current scholarship funds are relatively small, they will improve. The MPA Program's physical and administrative location within the Baucus Institute will increase fundraising efforts to provide additional scholarship and programmatic support for our students. For instance, we can partner with the Summer Indian Law Program to provide additional applied experiences and access for our students to increase their skills in tribal governance. Moreover, the MPA Director and Baucus Director plan to create a summer, one-week public service academy for students and practitioners to take one-hour trainings from notable alumni

and public sector employers.

The Commission requests the program elaborate on the changes to the program's budget health, and how it anticipates they will translate into long-term success. Given the newness of the move to the Law School, the Commission seeks evidence that the program's resource adequacy is sustainable and aligned with its mission. The Site Visit Team should explore how the program's level and use of resources reflects the program's mission and commitment to continuous improvement.

In its Response to the Interim Report (see pages 17-18), the Program noted that the move to the Law School has brought it budgetary health and stability. It further noted that, for the first time in its history, it has been able to diversify its funding sources between the operating budget, additional income from the MPA program fee and online courses (which were previously taken away by the political science department), and additional funds from the Baucus Institute.

The program also attached a letter from Dean ████ and a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Financial Relationship Between Blewett School of Law and Master of Public Administration Program (pages 19-20, and 21, respectively of the Response to the Interim Report)

Regarding standard 6.1, the SVT spoke with Law School Dean ████████, Baucus Institute Director ██████████, Provost ██████████, University President ████████, and MPA Program Director ████████████. The SVT also reviewed the MPA program budget.

Moving to the Law School has substantially improved the MPA program's resource base. This program uses all available resources in direct support of its mission, and it is able to achieve a lot with relatively little. The current resource does limit the growth of the program, as it now regularly has to turn away qualified applicants for whom there is no more space in the existing classes. Further, the MPA Director ████████ has chosen to teach an excess number of courses (3 courses both semesters), which indicates a need for more teaching capacity. Other MPA faculty also noted that the Director has taken on an excess load of work.

The University currently has no resources for additional lines, as it experienced a sharp drop in undergraduate enrollment for the better part of this decade, leading to an overall decrease in enrollment by about one third. The University will cut $5 million from the general academic budget over the next three years and aim to focus on areas of excellence and growth. The Law School and MPA program are among them.

The MPA program has a strong reputation in Missoula and the state, as testified by employers and alumni who interacted with the SVT. Further, there is increased interest among law students to do a dual degree.

As discussed in the section on governance (see standard 2.2 above), the SVT found consistent support by all relevant stakeholders for the permanency of the new home of the MPA program in the Law School, which bodes well for the stability of the resources accessible to the program. To allow for enrichment of the student experience and faculty development, the MPA program's regular budget is augmented by two additional streams of income:

First, the MPA program is able to retain revenue from the MPA program fee ($50 per credit hour). 15% of the program fee goes into the Law School budget for administrative overhead. The rest is retained by the MPA program. In the current fiscal year, this amounts to about $62,500, which covers the following: a stipend for the MPA Program Director, a share of the NASPAA membership fee, adjunct or summer salaries for three courses, program expenses, equipment for tenure-track faculty, the cost of participating in NASPAA's Accreditation Institute, and in-state travel for faculty and students.

Second, the Baucus Institute provides a $65,000 annual contribution. In the current fiscal year, this covers the following: a share of the NASPAA membership fee, adjunct or summer salaries for two courses, the cost of this accreditation site visit, five conference trips for MPA core faculty, support for the professional development of faculty teaching nonprofit courses, support for students, marketing materials, and the widely recognized Big Sky Poll, which benefits students as a learning experience

as well as serving the state.

The current Memorandum of Understanding about the Baucus Institute financial contribution to the MPA Program is valid through the 2021 fiscal year, i.e. for three fiscal years. Baucus Institute Director Panarella confirmed the Institute's commitment to renew the Memorandum of Understanding before its expiration, supporting the permanency of this arrangement. Dean ██████ clarified that the University of Montana allows no Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to exceed three years, which explains the validity of the current MoU.

Increased fundraising efforts by the Baucus Institute have the potential to further benefit the MPA program. According to Institute Director ██████, a current operational goal this spring semester is to raise $25,000 for MPA scholarships. A longer-term goal is to raise $5 million toward an extension of the Law School building, which would also bring increased space for the MPA program.

The program recognizes the need to focus efforts, given that resources are still limited. This has led them to decide to place the Big Sky Poll into moratorium after this fiscal year since other activities are more central to the program's mission activities.

According to Dean ██████, the financial situation of the Law School is better than that of many law schools around the country, as it has not experienced the same decline in enrollment. It is very focused on public service and practice, for which there is consistent, stable demand in Montana. This bodes well for the stability of resources for the MPA program in the foreseeable future.

In conversations with the University President, Provost, and Vice-Provost, the SVT learned that the University of Montana will be seeking to move to a more activity-based budgeting models over the next three years with a budget model that will reward programs such as the MPA program that are growing enrollments, using technology in innovative ways, participating in one or more of the University's Communities of Excellence, contributing to the priority of "Partnering with Place" through community engagement, and contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning within their own disciplines . While the details will be contentious, the Law School and MPA program, as one of the few areas of growth within the university, are likely to benefit from whatever arrangement will be chosen. Dean ██████ serves on the committee tasked with developing the new budget model.

New Group

Standard 7. Matching Communications with the Mission

7.1 Communications: The program will provide appropriate and current information about its mission, policies, practices, and accomplishments - including student learning outcomes - sufficient to inform decisinos by its stakeholders such as prospective and current students; faculty; employers of current students and graduates; university administrators; alumni; and accrediting agencies.

Standard 7.1 Status   Have No Concerns

Standard 7.1 Comments

The SVT spoke with MPA Director ██████, Dean ██████, and Director of Marketing ██████ ██████.

SVT reviewed web links and marketing materials.

The SVT observed that the program links work and have the proper information required for this standard is available and correct.

The move to the Law School has afforded the program the opportunity to change web pages more quickly than it otherwise would. The Law School has a dedicated communications professional that the program can and does utilize. The SVT was able to review handsome marketing materials provided to prospective students. The materials provided information extolling the advantages of the program in an attractive, modern, easy-to-read format with testimonials of current and past students.

The Law School's magazine (Montana Barrister) includes information on the MPA program and

the Baucus Institute. The Dean informed the SVT that the next issue will feature as the cover story the establishment of the Department of Public Administration and Policy.

In addition, the SVT was able to observe the program's innovative ideas in marketing its program. Because of its relationship with the Baucus Institute, the program has the opportunity to have its message communicated throughout the state of Montana and in the District of Columbia to influential persons. While the SVT was visiting the program, the head of Baucus Institute was in the District of Columbia fund-raising for Institute and its members.

While meeting with the Provost and President of the University, it was made clear to the SVT that both want to market and tout the success of the MPA program. The program is considered a success story at a difficult time for the University as a whole when undergraduate enrollments have dropped significantly. The program itself with the support of the university has reached out extensively to the public sector and not-for-profit community in Montana. This point was driven home to the SVT during its visit with the Alumni Council and community members. Both alumni and non-alumni are committed to helping the program. This includes some of the state's and region's highest elected officials, some of whom are alumni and some of whom are not, yet still see the benefits that the program brings to the field of public administration in the region.

The program has taken extra steps to market itself, outside of what is made available by the University. This has taken the form of paying for a marketing firm to conduct social media campaigns on behalf of the program and its first Public Service Academy scheduled for August 15-16, 2019. This event is co-sponsored by the MPA program and the Baucus Institute and brings back to campus Dr. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ for a workshop on "Diversity in the Public Sector: Where Do We Go From Here?" as well as prominent MPA alum and public service professionals from Montanta to address topics such as "Innovative Thinking for the the Public Sector's Future," "Boss Lady: Opportunities and Challenges", "Nonprofits as a Catalyst for a More Civil Society", and "Fundamentals of Public Sector Negotiations".

In addition, the program has created distinct logos and such as its "I Heart Bureaucracy" campaign, marketing its program in a light-hearted manner that students are fully embracing (to the point of one student planning to have it tattooed on his body!).

Section 4 Commendations and Recommendations

In this section, the site visit team may commend the program on outstanding efforts and accomplishments and may recommend actions to strengthen the program. First, within the framework of peer review and accreditation (and without compromising the judgment to be made by COPRA), it is appropriate for the SVT to identify items that are well done or that are innovative in the field. This recognition of attainments and successes can add to the items covered in the review of standards.

Second, the site visit team may develop recommendations or suggestions which it believes will strengthen the program. These recommendations should flow from the mission of the program (and should avoid personal views of how things should be done).

Commendations

Based on our observations during the visit, we would like to call attention to and commend the program for the following:

1. The leadership of Associate Professor and MPA Director (and soon to be Chair of the Department of Public Administration and Policy) ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.
Without exception, every single person the SVT spoke to during the visit -- students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and community leaders -- sung the praises of Dr. ▮▮▮▮. Her energy, enthusiasm, commitment and positive outlook is evident in all aspects of the program. She has played a vital role in shepherding the MPA program through a contentious and difficult transition from Political Science to the Law School, handling the concrete tasks of facilitating new polices and procedures while also establishing a mutually-supportive organizational culture that many refer to as a "family" and an "effective team". The SVT notes that Dr. ▮▮▮ is also institutionalizing practices through formal policies, delegating more to the staff she now has to

support her, and mentoring junior faculty to assume leadership positions in the future.

2. The marriage of public administration and law.
The move of the MPA program to the Law School and its affiliation with the Baucus Institute were identified by COPRA as an area of concern, however the SVT found this arrangement to be one of the greatest strengths of the program and an arrangement that could serve as a model for other programs. While the profession laments the inadequacy of legal knowledge among many MPA graduates, the University of Montana MPA program is strengthening the competencies of both MPA and JD students through the co-location of the two programs and the extensive collaboration among the faculty.

3. Innovative use of technology.
An increasing number of MPA programs are using technology to offer hybrid or online courses. Few that the SVT is aware of are doing so as well or as creatively. In particular, the SVT was impressed with the program's use of desk-based (https://www.revolverobotics.com/) and fully mobile robots (https://www.doublerobotics.com/) to allow students and speakers to participate remotely in a more active way than other technologies allow. Instead of having remote participants on a large fixed screen at the front of the room or as disembodied voices on a conference call unit, the robots use ipads on desk or floor units that can rotate side-to-side, up and down and, in the case of the floor units, around the room at the remote control of the student. The robots have allowed students to continue their coursework and complete the degree even when work or family commitments force them to move away. They allow students who are ill or traveling to participate fully in the class, including in group activities. And they permit prominent public officials to stay engaged even when their schedules do not allow them to be in Missoula.

4. Strong commitment of alumni and community leaders.
The MPA program has a large, growing and very dedicated group of supporters in the community. These include alumni, mentors, internship supervisors and other community collaborators. Despite a blizzard that lowered the temperature to -25 (with the windchill) and left streets unplowed, all but one of the invited 14 alumni and and community leaders still attended the evening meeting with Site Visit Team. This included the Mayor of Missoula and the state Attorney General (who participated as a robot). They sung the praises of the MPA program. They also expressed support for the program's move to the Law School and its connection to the Max Baucus Institute.

Recommendations

While not directly related to conformity with NASPAA Standards, the Site Visit Team offers the following recommendations to the program for their consideration:

1. A more distinctive program mission
The MPA program at the University of Montana has the potential to distinguish itself from other programs in public administration and nonprofit management on the basis of several characteristics, not the least of which are its location within and strong connections to the Law School, a commitment to serving and preparing its graduates to serve the state of Montana, and faculty and institutional expertise in Tribal Policy, Natural Resources, and issues of Women and Policy. There is no shortage of programs offering nonprofit tracks or specializations, but few can boast the strong legal training or unique issue area foci of the University of Montana program; this could be part of the mission and marketing for the NP track. The SVT encourages the program to use the results of the SWOT analysis and the upcoming retreat to begin a process of highlighting the unique strengths of the MPA program and using a more distinctive mission to make adjustments to the competencies as well as AQ/PQ criteria.

2. Highlight and Invest in Native American Diversity
Given the history, demography and public policy environment in Montana, the expertise within the Law School, and the priorities of the University, the MPA program has the opportunity to be a

leader in diversity and inclusion for Native Americans. The SVT encourages the program to expand their Diversity Plan to ensure that all students have exposure to Native American/tribal law, not only those who take elective courses in the law school or who participate in the Summer Indian Program, and to formalize relations with Native American leaders to develop a list of guest speakers and create a schedule linked to required courses to ensure that students have regular guest speakers.

3. The SVT recommends that the MPA program document and systematically evaluate how students in public administration and law benefit from the co-location and collaboration, and look for opportunities to share (through published research, conference presentations, workshops, etc.) the information in both communities. One option might be to propose a joint symposium issue of the Journal of Public Affairs Education and the Journal of Legal Education.

4. The SVT recommends that the MPA program continue to emphasize to the leaders of the University its demonstrated alignment with all University priorities and its clear potential to be a signature program that brands and distinguishes the University of Montana. The MPA program has increased enrollments at a time when most University of Montana programs experienced declining enrollments, and the program is turning away qualified applicants demonstrating they could grow more with additional resources. The MPA program faculty are exemplars in community collaborations, thus promoting the University's commitment to "Partnering with Place". They already have a successful dual degree program (MPA/JD) and are interested in developing others (most notably MPA/MPH), thereby interdisciplinary collaborations, and they fit logically into multiple UM Communities of Excellence. The MPA program faculty embrace the University's interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning, and they actively utilize and systematically evaluate technological and other pedagogical innovations in their classes. The MPA program has demonstrated a commitment to student learning assessment that extends beyond institutional or accreditation requirements, and is embedded in the program design. The MPA program's affiliation with the Baucus Institute makes it a prime candidate for external support. And finally, the program's position within and close relationship with the Law School is, to the best knowledge of the SVT, unprecedented and could be used to brand and distinguish the MPA program nationally and internationally. The MPA program is encouraged to document for the University how it could benefit the Unviersity to recognize, leverage and invest in the MPA Program for the reasons listed above. In the absence of a new budget model or workload policy for the University (which could take years to develop), the MPA program may find it useful to develop and present a formal proposal linking new resources from the University to milestone accomplishments by the program (enrollments, innovations, etc.).

Section 5: Breakthrough Practices (Optional)

Please use this space to describe any exemplary practices you may have noted while on this Site Visit. *This section is not part of the Site Visit Report for conformance determination*, but rather an area where researchers, COPRA and others can search for programs doing exciting things, to consider including those programs as examples in various communications. Please use descriptive words that might be useful in a keyword search (capstone, mission, assessment, direct measures, etc.).

The SVT would call out the MPA program at the University of Montana for two breakthrough practices mentioned in the Commendations which we would recommend they highlight at the NASPAA conference and in publications in JPAE. The first relates to their integration of public administration and law in all aspects of the program (curriculum, institutional arrangements, community engagement opportunities for students, advisory board membership, etc.). The second relates to their innovative use of technology for instructional and other program purposes. In particular, the SVT was impressed with the program's use of desk-based (https://www.revolverobotics.com/) and fully mobile robots (https://www.doublerobotics.com/) to allow students and speakers to participate remotely in a more active way than other technologies allow.

Please check this box if the program has breakthrough practices in diversity and social equity. (As a potential leading example and for potential consideration   No

for NASPAA's Diversity and Social Equity Awards.) Breakthrough diversity practices should be demonstrable program strategies developed with respect to the program's unique mission and context. *This section is not part of the Site Visit Report for conformance determination*, **but rather an area where researchers, COPRA and others can search for programs doing exciting things.**

Additional Material

Any additional materials reviewed during your visit may be uploaded here:

Download