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| **California State University, Fresno**  **College of Social Science**  **Political Science/MPA**  **Department/Program Assessment Coordinator: Naomi Bick** |
| **Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)** |
| Mission Statement |
| Introductory Statement: The MPA Program at California State University, Fresno is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The MPA program builds on the belief effective administration and leadership of public and nonprofit organizations require the development of critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as an appreciation for ethical decision-making. It is this belief that provides the foundation for the mission and goals of the MPA program.  **Mission:**  (1) The MPA program teaches competencies in public and nonprofit administration that allow students to effectively and ethically serve the public interest.  (2) The MPA program prepares students to lead and manage public and/or nonprofit organizations; to educate both elected officials and the citizenry about public policy tradeoffs; and to facilitate an understanding among diverse perspectives on a given policy issue.  (3) The MPA program provides educational opportunities for students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills; to appreciate and engage in ethical decision making; and to have the ability to communicate effectively with individuals of diverse social backgrounds.  (4) The MPA program seeks to develop and educate a student population that reflects a diversity of social, academic, and professional backgrounds. |

## Institutional Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes/Goals, and SLO’s

* 1. Institutional Learning Outcomes. Fresno State ILO’s are posted on the following webpage: <http://fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/fresno-state-assessment.html>
     1. **Developing a foundational, broad, and integrative knowledge** of the social sciences and their integration with public administration. Students will consolidate learning from different fields and explore the concepts and questions that bridge those essential areas of learning. Graduate students will articulate the significance, implications and challenges within their field in a societal and global context. In fields in which interdisciplinarity is fundamental, graduate students will further draw from the perspectives of other domains of inquiry/practice so as to assess a problem better and offer solutions to it.

2. **Acquiring specialized knowledge** as identified by program learning outcomes in their major field. Students will demonstrate expertise in a specialized area of study, including integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice. Graduate students will demonstrate further mastery of the field’s theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry. They will also show the ability to assess major contributions to the field, as well as expand on those contributions through empirical research or aesthetic exploration.

3. **Improving intellectual skills** including critical thinking, effective oral and written communication, information literacy and quantitative reasoning.Students will demonstrate fluency via application of these skills to everyday problems and complex challenges. Graduate students will hone these skills further, demonstrating coherent arguments, analysis, insight, creativity, and acumen as they address local, regional, and global issues in their respective fields of study.

4. **Applying knowledge** by integrating theory, practice, and problem solving to address real world issues using both individual and team approaches. Students will apply their knowledge in a project, paper, exhibit, performance, or other appropriate demonstration that links knowledge and skills acquired at the university with those from other areas of their lives. Graduate students will integrate knowledge and skills from coursework, practicum, and research to address critical issues in their field and demonstrate advanced application of knowledge through a culminating experience that validates, challenges, and/or expands the profession’s body of knowledge.

5. **Exemplifying equity, ethics, and engagement.** Students will form and effectively communicate their own evidence-based and reasoned views on public issues, interact with others to address social, environmental and economic challenges, apply knowledge of diversity and cultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in theclassroom and the community, value the complexity of ethical decision making in a diverse society, acknowledge the importance of standards in academic and professional integrity, and demonstrate honesty, tolerance, and civility in social and academic interactions. Building upon this at the graduate level, students will apply these values in the creation of scholarly and/or aesthetic works that enrich the human experience.

* 1. Learning Outcomes (or goals) are the specific knowledge and skills that the department/program will develop or strengthen in students. These PLOs (or goals) may be broader than SLOs, but must be measurable and each PLO must have at least one SLO to which is directly linked/aligned.

1. **PLO: Acquire skills necessary to lead and manage in the public interest**

(a.) SLO: Investigate public administration theories in course exams and written assignments (including Human Resources, Budgeting, Public Policy, Ethics, and Organizational Theory)

1. **PLO: Acquire and enhance skills to participate in, and contribute to, the policy process**

## (a.)SLO: Evaluate alternative approaches to addressing policy problems using a variety of frameworks and tools

## (b.)SLO: Compose effective written and oral communication to articulate policy decisions

1. **PLO: Acquire skills to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment**

## (a.)SLO: Integrate a variety of analytical frameworks and methods for solving complex problems and formulating recommendations

1. **PLO: Acquire and enhance skills to articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective**

## (a.)SLO: Evaluate the practices of public administrators (public officials) using concepts of social equity

(b.)SLO: Critique the decisions and actions of public administrators (public officials) from an ethical perspective

1. **PLO: Acquire skills to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large**

## (a.)SLO: Create written and oral materials tailored to an audience’s level of expertise and needs

## Curriculum Map [d]: Courses in which SLO’s are addressed and evaluated

|  | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course | PLO 1 | PLO 2A | PLO 2B | PLO 3 | PLO 4A | PLO4B | PLO 5 |
| MPA 200 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M |
| MPA 210 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M |
| MPA 201 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D |
| MPA 245 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M |
| MPA 230 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M |
| MPA 260 | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M | I, D, M |

For courses in the major, using the abbreviations below, indicate which outcomes are introduced, which are developed, and which are mastered in that particular course.

| **I = Introduced** | **D = Developed** | **M=Mastered** |  |
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## SLO’s Mapped to Assessment Measures and Methods [e]

| Assessment Measure | Evaluation  Method | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO | PLO/SLO |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| (Assignment or survey) | Criteria,  Rubric,  Score | PLO 1 | PLO 2A | PLO 2B | PLO 3 | PLO 4A | PLO4B | PLO 5 |
| Research Paper/Term Paper | Rubric | X |  | X | X |  | X | X |
| Exam | Score | X |  |  | X |  | X | X |
| Oral presentations | Rubric |  | X | X |  |  |  | X |
| Culminating experience | Criteria | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

## Assessment Measures: Description of Assignment and Method (rubric, criteria, etc.) used to evaluate the assignment [f]

In order to effectively assess the student learning outcomes (SLO) for the MPA program, we will utilize both direct and indirect measures. In addition to this, we will seek to use multiple measures of the same SLO in order to collect as much information as possible on the complex phenomena that are the products of the educational process.

* 1. Direct Measures (Department/Program must use a minimum of three different direct measures)

**A. Direct Measures**

Each of these materials will be analyzed in terms of how it relates to program-related SLO. Course instructors will be asked to prepare a short report on how students have performed with respect to the program SLO, as well as their recommendations concerning actions required in light of their assessment.

(1) **Essays/Final Papers** – Faculty collect course essays or final papers with specific kinds of essays that students have written in core courses in the MPA program (MPA 200, MPA 201, MPA 210, MPA 230, MPA 245 and MPA 260), as well as elective courses. These essays/final papers are evaluated using the writing rubric adopted by the MPA program as well as a critical thinking Rubric. Essays and finals are also used to perform course specific embedded assessments.

Benchmark: Student essays/papers are evaluated using a rubric containing multiple dimensions. Each dimension is scored from 1 to 5. Students are expected to score a four in each of the categories.

(2) **Culminating Experience** – Faculty use the comprehensive examinations from each course as a writing portfolio and assess the quality of the answers based on a program developed rubric. Each MPA student is tested over the program’s six core courses (MPA 200, MPA 201, MPA 210, MPA 230, MPA 245, and MPA 260). Student answers to questions posed as part of the comprehensive exam will provide additional insights into how well students are doing with respect to relevant SLO. Alternatively, they may complete a thesis which similarly requires an incorporation of the core courses and MPA competencies.

Benchmark: Student comprehensive culminating experiences are evaluated using a rubric containing multiple dimensions. Each dimension is scored from 1 to 5. Students are expected to score a four in each of the categories.

Papers and culminating experiences are also used to evaluate the extent to which students have mastered information literacy skills.

(3) **Oral Presentations** – Currently, instructors in both the MPA 230 and MPA 260 courses require students to do formal research presentations. We have developed an oral presentation rubric for use in evaluating this important aspect of our students’ development.

Benchmark: Student presentations are evaluated using a rubric, which examines both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. It uses the following categories: Content, synthesis, and organization (0-40); Quality of slides (0-20); Q&A with audience (0-20); Voice quality, pace of presentation, focus (0-20). Students are expected to attain a minimum of 80% in each category.

(4) **Examinations:** Student examinations are used in some classes such as MPA 201 and MPA 200 to evaluate performance in methodology training and the application of theories.

Benchmark: Students are expected to attain an 80% on the examinations.

**B. Indirect Measures**

(1) **Surveys** – Specific types of surveys include exit interviews, alumni surveys, and employer interviews.

Entrance and Exit interviews will be administered in both questionnaire and interview formats, whichever is preferred by students graduating the program.

Alumni and employer interviews will be offered on a less frequent basis than the others. However in at least every fourth, the department will send out Alumni surveys and analyze the data and the department will also conduct employer surveys on a regular (but not yearly) basis and will analyze these results individually and think comprehensively about the results from Alumni surveys and Employer interviews.

## Assessment Schedule/Timeline [g]

| Academic  Year | Measure | SLO | SLO |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2024-2025 | Writing Assignments | 1 | 4A |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2025-2026 | Research Paper | 2A |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2026-2027 | Oral presentation; writing assignment | 2B | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2027-2028 | Exams | 3 | 4B |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2028-2029 | Writing Assignment | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2029-2030 | Research Paper | 2A 4A |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2030-2031 | Oral presentation | 2B |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| Closing the Loop [h,j,k] |
| **Fresno State Closing the Loop process is described immediately below.** |
| A major assessment report, which focuses on assessment activities carried out the previous academic year, is submitted in September of each academic year and evaluated by the Learning Assessment Team and Director of Assessment at Fresno State. |
| Program/Department Closing the Loop process:  The MPA program has a graduate committee responsible for monitoring and reviewing the graduate program curriculum and assessment. The graduate coordinator is chair of both the graduate committee and the chair of graduate assessment. The graduate coordinator and the undergraduate assessment chair will also work together to ensure that assessment measures stay valid and current. Any and all changes to the graduate program are approved by the graduate committee and assessment coordinators. Prioritizing graduate program assessment and success is a department focus and will continue as such as we implement new assessment procedures. |