

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lori Weber
MPA Coordinator
California State University, Chico

FROM: Jeffery L. Osgood, Jr.
Chair, Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration

DATE: July 30, 2018

SUBJECT: NASPAA Accreditation Review

On behalf of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA), I am pleased to inform you that the Commission found your Master of Public Administration to be in substantial conformity with NASPAA Standards, subject to the monitoring provisions outlined in the enclosed report. Your program is accredited for a period of six (6) years – September 1, 2018-August 31, 2024 – and will be included on the Annual Roster of Accredited Programs. An abbreviated letter announcing your accreditation has also been sent to your Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Debra Larson, and I encourage you to further share this decision letter with your colleagues and program administrators.

Please accept the Commission's congratulations on the accreditation of your program. By pursuing and achieving accreditation through a rigorous peer review, your program has demonstrated a substantial commitment to quality public service education. You are part of the global community of over 200 accredited graduate programs in public service.

Your program is in substantial conformance with the NASPAA Standards. However, the Commission concluded that questions remain about the following standards: Standards 3.1, 5.1. Accordingly, COPRA plans to monitor your continued progress, annually, on these specific standards. The Commission asks that you report your progress on these particular standard(s) each year in your annual accreditation maintenance report.

If you have any questions about this decision or NASPAA's accreditation process, I would be happy to answer them via email at JOsgood@wcupa.edu. Questions about this year's annual report should be directed to Heather Hamilton, Accreditation Manager and Director of Assessment, at Hamilton@naspaa.org.

Warmly,



Jeffery L. Osgood, Jr.
Chair, Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation

**Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
Report on Monitoring Provisions**

**Master of Public Administration
California State University, Chico**

July 30, 2018

Item 1: Standard 3.1 – Faculty Qualifications

Standard 3.1 states, “The program's faculty members will be academically or professionally qualified to pursue the program’s mission.”

The Site Visit Team stated in their report, “The faculty are making a variety of academic and professional contributions. The program however does not have clear definitions and standards for Academically Qualified and Professionally Qualified faculty in their RTP (Retention, Tenure, Promotion) policies. We urge the program to operationalize AQ/PQ standards.”

In its response to the Site Visit report, the program noted, “This issue was raised during the site visit. Because review, tenure, and promotion standards exist at the department-level, this requires a decision to be made by the coordinators of the seven academic programs in the Department. This will be on the agenda for the Fall 2018 program coordinators’ meeting.”

The Commission requests the program provide its operational definitions for academically and professionally qualified faculty. The Commission seeks confirmation that faculty possess the credentials and expertise consistent with the program mission, and that the program ensures faculty sustain and improve their qualifications over time. In upcoming Accreditation Maintenance Reports, the Commission requests updates on relevant discussions stemming from the Fall 2018 program coordinators’ meeting.

Item 2: Standard 5.1 – Universal Required Competencies

Standard 5.1 states, “As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and 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 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.”

In the Interim Report, the Commission requested “the program provide further information on its approach to student learning assessment. Based on the narrative, it is unclear how the analysis of POLS 680 data has led to explicit programmatic improvement. The Commission requests the program elaborate on its assessment cycle, including the use of rubrics, additional evidence gathered as indicated in the narrative, and the process by which the faculty analyzed the data.” The Commission also requested, “the program provide updated information regarding its progress through the assessment

cycles, including gathering evidence of student learning, analyzing the evidence, and using the results for programmatic improvement.”

In its response to the Interim Report, the program stated,

our program implemented a curricular change to the culminating paper process, whereby we added an additional 1-unit ‘planning/preparatory’ class, which students take the semester prior to undertaking their culminating paper. A repeated analysis of culminating papers (as described in attached assessment report) from the upcoming AY18-19 will allow us to begin to re-evaluate the outcome of this specific curricular change— repeating the processes/measures/rubric as in the attached assessment report. In addition, we have just added an alternative comprehensive exam option to students culminating experience. This exam option will take effect in AY18-19, but we suspect we will need data through the following year to get a large enough sample of students pursuing this alternative to continue to assess this change to our curriculum...Finally, the assessment calendar provides the specifics of how our program has undertaken a full assessment cycle for the NASPAA Universal Competencies. In addition to the full assessment report for our self-study year provided in the Appendix to this response, we are happy to provide the additional assessment reports since our last NASPAA site visit (spring 2010) to the site team during their upcoming visit, if the team would like to examine additional assessment reports in greater detail.”

The Site Visit Team

reviewed assessment reports for the years 2009-10 to 2016-17. The program has indeed completed assessment cycles on all of NASPAA’s URCs. Assessment was based predominantly on direct measures like classroom artifacts. Assessment is conducted primarily around the 7 SLOs in the program. Although these SLOs have been mapped to the NASPAA URCs, it would easier to interpret progress on assessment if results were reported around the URCs.

Additionally, the report noted,

In 2016 the program developed a new student learning objective focused on diversity (SLO #5). The SLO states: ‘Students demonstrate proficiency in communicating knowledge, awareness, appreciation, or sensitivity of differences associated with race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, language, and/or socioeconomic status within the field of public administration.’ This is a valuable addition to the program’s objectives and was developed as a result of reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of their SLOs in relation to their mission.

In its response to the Site Visit report, the program provided an updated assessment calendar and course map and confirmed “the program has moved forward with an indirect assessment of our ‘diversity’ student learning outcome #5, as discussed with the SVT.”

The Commission requests the program continue to collect and analyze evidence of student learning on the required competencies and use that evidence to guide program improvement. The Commission seeks evidence that the program implements and is accountable for delivering its distinctive mission

through the course of study it offers and through the learning outcomes it expects its graduates to attain – the program should demonstrate how its curricular content matches the emphasis of its overall mission. For example, given the 1 hour adjustment to the curriculum, what progress is the program observing as a result of the change? What other evidence-based strategies to improve student learning has the program initiated as a result of student learning assessment? The Commission seeks evidence of continuous improvement based on assessment of universal required competencies.

Over time, the Commission expects that programs will continue to develop and implement their approach to strategic program management, including student learning assessment, and that this maturation will be evident in the program's annual accreditation maintenance reports. As the public service field continues to advance and evolve, COPRA seeks to support programs as they strategically pursue their missions, graduate leaders in public service, and achieve excellence in education.

Please note that the Commission will review each of your annual accreditation maintenance reports to determine ongoing conformity with NASPAA Standards, including progress in the areas noted above. Your annual reports and COPRA's actions in response to your reports will become a permanent part of your record for your next accreditation review. COPRA's acceptance of the Program's annual reports is contingent on receiving satisfactory responses on the issues noted. If the program does not submit the information requested regarding the monitored standards in annual reports, the Commission may require the program to re-enter the accreditation cycle with an updated Self Study Report. Monitoring provisions remain in effect and must be addressed each year until the program is notified by COPRA that the monitoring has been removed.

The Commission also wishes to reemphasize its commitment to the transparency and accountability central to Standard 7.1 – Communications. Accredited programs are expected to consistently, accurately, and publicly provide their stakeholders with relevant information about the program and its student learning outcomes, to include graduation rates and employment placement. Programs found out of conformance at the annual report review each fall will be expected to resolve any nonconformities immediately upon notification, at the risk of COPRA alerting the university provost and pulling the program into an early reaccreditation review.

We look forward to receiving your annual report by **November 1, 2018**. Questions about this year's annual report should be directed to Heather Hamilton at Hamilton@naspaa.org.