A. Program Student Learning Outcomes

Within public administration education, there has been a movement towards competency-based education. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), which is the membership association of graduate programs in public administration, public policy, and public affairs, has identified five competency domains that graduates from public administration programs should be able to demonstrate. This year, we significantly revised the PLOs and adopted the five NASPAA-identified domains with modification for the MPA PLOs.

PLO 1. Students who graduate with a MPA will be able to lead and manage in public governance while demonstrating an understanding of the role of theory in public governance and the application of these theories toward administrative inquiry.

PLO 1 supports the CSUEB ILOs of “act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels” and “demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study.”

PLO 2. Students who graduate with a MPA will be able to participate in and contribute to the policy process.

PLO 2 supports the CSUEB ILOs of “apply knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities” and “work collaboratively and respectfully as members and leaders of diverse teams and communities” and “demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study.”

PLO 3. Students who graduate with a MPA will be able to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and demonstrate an understanding of interpretive and quantitative research methodologies.
PLO 3 supports the CSUEB ILOs of “think critically and creatively and apply analytical and quantitative reasoning to address complex challenges and everyday problems” and “demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study.”

PLO 4. Students who graduate with a MPA will be able to articulate and apply a public service perspective.

PLO 4 supports the CSUEB ILOs of “communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others” and “act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels.”

PLO 5. Students who graduate with a MPA will be able to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

PLO 5 supports the CSUEB ILOs of “communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others” and “work collaboratively and respectfully as members and leaders of diverse teams and communities.”

B. Program Student Learning Outcome(s) Assessed

We assess all five of the PLOs annually.

C. Summary of Assessment Process

We assess PLOs annually. PUAD 6901 (Graduate Synthesis) is the MPA capstone course and requires the completion of an essay exam, which is designed to directly assess the students’ level of competency.

D. Summary of Assessment Results

Previously, we tried to use pre/post-tests to assess learning in the courses for the health care administration MPA option but during our last annual retreat as part of our “closing of the loop” process, we discussed that it was cumbersome for faculty to have the pretest in the first session of the course, confusing to the students, and created too much administrative work to
track the data. We also previously used a Student Exit Survey as an indirect measure of learning, but have discontinued it in favor of the exam for PUAD 6901. Students now must reflect on what they have learned in the program and tie their learning to each of the SLOs and ILOs. We found that students were reluctant to complete the exit survey and it was time-consuming for administrative staff to input the data. All of the SLOs/ILOs are now directly assessed in PUAD 6901, which is the Graduate Synthesis Comprehensive Exam, using rubrics that we have developing or all developing for each SLO. These new SL outcome approaches will be implemented in the 2014-15 SLO assessments and we anticipate reporting the results in the following FACT Year-End-Report.

E. Suggestions and Recommendations for the CLASS FACT Project in the Future

Opportunity for cross-fertilization of ‘feedback loop’ ideas by faculty visiting each others’ faculty discussion meetings about accommodating what has been learned from assessments into future program/curriculum enhancements.

Thank you for your hard work for the past year, and have a Great Summer!