

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

DESIGNATION CODE: 98-99 CAPR 7

DATE SUBMITTED: May 13, 1999

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources

SUBJECT: Five-year Program Review, Master of Public Administration

ACTION

REQUESTED: Approval of the CAPR Program Review, Master of Public Administration

On May 6, 1999, CAPR met with Professor Mary Timney, Chair of the Department to discuss the Program Review. As is the option for departments undergoing program reviews, a department may elect to respond to an accreditation report rather than invite an additional outside reviewer. In March of 1999, the department received a site visit from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. The site visit team, composed of Professors Daniel M. Barber of CSU, Long Beach, John N. Collins of Seattle University, and Dale Wright of Brigham Young University evaluated the department. Their report and the department's response comprised the Five-Year Program Review submitted to CAPR.

PROGRAM REVIEW: The accreditation team requested details on student population demographics and the nature of the opportunities and threats the program may face in the future. The department responded that the CSUH service area includes nine counties, some of which are the fastest growing counties in California. There are many opportunities for future growth in these areas, including the City of Oakland cohort program and the Contra Costa Campus. The governments in these areas are all experiencing growing pains and the demand for advanced education in public administration should remain high for the foreseeable future. Additional opportunities for growth in the MPA program include nonprofit management, health care management, cooperation with other campus departments, and international MPA programs, possibly in Moscow, Hong Kong, Vienna or Beijing. The major threat to this potential growth is the lack of adequate resources related to shrinking university budgets.

The site visit team requested additional information regarding the nature of graduating student exit interviews, periodic interviews with alumni, periodic review of faculty courses and teaching styles, and membership and function of the advisory board. The department responded that the interviews began in fall quarter of 1998, and faculty plan to review the data on an annual basis. Alumni follow-up is done via informal contacts, and faculty members are reviewed via the PT&R process. An advisory board composed mainly of local government administrators has met to advise the program. Additional information was requested regarding improvements to course offerings. Changes initiated by faculty to update the curriculum include adding seven new courses, dropping four courses, introducing three new option areas, including Public Management, Public Financial Administration, and Human Resource Management, and modifying four courses.

The accreditation team asked the program to explain why major portions of the curriculum are satisfied by prerequisite undergraduate courses. However, during the site visit, the team observed no problems with these courses having a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students, and there was evidence that faculty members approach these courses more as graduate level than undergraduate level courses. The visitors were also concerned that non-core faculty routinely offer key specialization courses. The department responded that during the self-study year the core faculty was temporarily smaller than normal, and at this time they are in the process of hiring 2.3 new tenure-track faculty for the 1999-2000 academic year. The department also remarked that the quality of their part-time faculty is excellent and highly qualified to offer specialization courses in the MPA program. The team acknowledged that faculty members undertake a heavy teaching load yet engage in productive research and professional contributions via papers, conferences and similar efforts. All faculty members seem well engaged in their areas of specialty, and they are the most diverse in the field.

Regarding student services, the visitors requested additional information on the extent and nature of tracking current and past students to determine their career paths and conditions and the general level of student advisement. The department responded that the general level of advisement seems to be as much as students need. Each student is assigned to an advisor, and if the assigned advisor is not available, any member of the faculty is happy to meet with students for advising purposes. The most recent survey of graduates for the past three years showed that 44% reported that the MPA degree had helped them get a better job or a promotion, while 77% reported that they had found the department to be helpful when they had a problem.

Regarding support services and facilities, the visitors found that money for outreach, recruitment and general program marketing is minimal. A modest alumni fund is present but allocation of funds for reproduction, telecommunications, subscriptions, memberships, travel, research support and technology enhancements must be planned very carefully. The chair is developing an improved program budgeting report to better make the case for the above needs. Classrooms appear to have only the basic and minimal equipment needed. The classrooms seem to be at the end of their normal life span in terms of fixed audio-visual equipment, desks and tables, and related facilities. The actual usage of faculty offices was assessed as adequate. Although two faculty members share some offices, the offices are large and it is rare that more than one faculty member is in the office at any given time. The potential expansion of the faculty will present some space problems since at present a well-used lounge area is the only unassigned office. For purposes of computing, students must use the open labs in their building and the library. Internet accounts are free and available for remote learners and on-campus students who have computers of their own.

Recommendations: CAPR recommends continuation of the Master of Public Administration degree program without modification.