Master of Public Administration Assessment Plan

Program: MPA in Public Administration (MPA)
College of Business & Public Management
School of Criminal Justice & Public Administration
Dr. Morgan Laury, Coordinator

Mission:
The Master of Public Administration Program at Kean University is committed to the advanced professional preparation of primarily in-service students from the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area for managerial roles in state and local government, health services organizations, and environmental management arenas. We are dedicated to the provision of a program that will:

• Inculcate generalist managerial skills;
• Provide competence in current and cutting edge managerial technologies;
• Establish the ability to function effectively in complex, culturally diverse organizational structures;
• Expand and evolve to meet changing regional needs; and
• Promote student commitment to ethical standards of managerial practice.

The program is dedicated to maintaining an educational environment in which diversity can flourish and an atmosphere in which mutual respect characterizes relations among members of a pluralist community.

Assessment Process:
MPA students have 5 required courses to take as part of the requirements for the degree regardless of concentration (PA 5001, PA 5021, PA 5030, PA 5031, PA 5990). Additionally, students pursuing the general program have 3 additional required courses, (PA 5010, PA 5040, PA 5050); those pursuing a concentration in health care administration have 5 additional required courses (PA 5810, PA 5820, PA 5825, PA 5830, PA 5850). Those pursuing a concentration in nonprofit management have 4 additional courses (PA 5710, PA 5730, PA 5215, MGS 5030); those students pursuing a concentration in environmental management have 3 additional requirements (PA 5605, PA 5610, PA 5615). A required 6-credit internship for students who do not have 2 or more years of managerial or professional experience is also a mandatory part of the MPA program. Beyond these courses and the internship, students take additional electives in public administration. The required courses provide the foundation for research and theoretical aspects of public administration, as well as for practice in various areas in the field.
The program’s learning goals, and subsequent assessment of these learning goals, is concentrated in the five core courses required of all MPA students. Each core course incorporates multiple assessment tools as part of the evaluation process; culminating assessment is also done towards the end of the student’s degree program, specifically, in PA 5990. Data is also collected as part of the required internship. Finally, technical and quantitative skills are evaluated in courses devoted to those topics. These classroom assessments have provided feedback on student learning that has informed the curriculum. For example, faculty teaching the “early” courses in the MPA curriculum found, from classroom discussions and assignments, that many students lacked a basic understanding of Public Administration. A review of students’ transcripts revealed that quite a few students – including those who were currently working in public administration jobs – had not majored in PA as undergraduates. As a result, they did not know its history, or some of the conceptual models and vocabulary. Thus, a new course was created and added to the curriculum – “Foundations in Public Administration.” Furthermore, students were required to take this course FIRST which had the added benefit of creating a “cohort” that would benefit the students throughout their curriculum.

Direct measures to assess attainment of program SLOs are done primarily in PA 5690 and PA 5990 (see below for listing). PA faculty will meet each May to analyze assessment data as part of a continual process of curriculum improvement. Each year, data from scored student assignments will be collected and analyzed to identify areas of program strengths and weaknesses; this data will inform our curriculum decisions, ultimately resulting in program improvements. The term-long project in this course will serve as a basis for assessing most of the learning goals listed below.

The Assessment Process

Based on the accrediting body requirements (The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration) all students graduating from the Kean MPA Program will have the following competencies:

**Universal Required Competencies:**

A. Ability to lead and manage in public governance  
B. Ability to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry  
C. Ability to articulate and apply a public service value  
D. Ability to participate in and contribute to the public policy process  
E. Ability to synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions

The MPA program has defined Student Learning Objectives (SLO’s) to measure these competencies. Our SLO’s are consistent with our mission of preparing students for management roles in government, health administration, non-profit organizations, and environmental management arenas.

**Competencies and Student Learning Objectives (SLO’s):**
Students graduating with a MA in Public Administration from Kean will be able to:

Competency 1: To lead and manage in public governance (KU1, KU2, KU3, KU4)

- **SLO 1.A:** Demonstrate the ability to lead and manage people, projects, finance and information in public, non-profit and health service organizations.

  Direct Measures: Internship supervisor evaluation, Role-playing projects in class.

  Indirect Measures: Student Exit Survey, Alumni Survey

- **SLO 1.B:** Ability to distinguish between various theories and approaches to leadership in specific cases and situations

  Direct Measures: Case study analysis, research paper

- **SLO 1.C:** Valuing leadership qualities, diversity, ethics and multiple worldviews.

  Indirect Measures: Alumni Survey, Student Exit Survey

Competency 2: Communicating and interacting productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry (KU2, KU3, KU4)

- **SLO 2.A:** Demonstrates the ability to formally present complex, conceptual material in understandable, professional manner

  Direct Measures: Oral presentation of Master’s thesis, community projects

  Indirect Measure: Student Exit Survey

- **SLO 2.B:** Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, managers, and clients

  Direct Measure: Participation in team projects

  Indirect Measure: Evaluation by internship supervisor

- **SLO 2.C:** Values productive, collegial relationships and appropriate communication patterns

  Indirect Measures: Student Exit Survey, Alumni Survey.
Competency 3: To articulate and apply a public service value (KU3, KU4)

- SLO 3.A: Understanding of the concepts of democracy, civic engagement, fairness, ethics, professionalism, transparency, accountability and social equity as applied to public affairs and administration.

  Direct Measures: Research paper, capstone paper

  Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey

- SLO 3.B: Demonstrate the ability to communicate fundamental concepts and values of the field (e.g., responsibility, transparency, accountability, ethical behavior)

  Direct Measures: Capstone paper, oral presentations

- SLO 3.C: Displaying, valuing administrative responsibility, accountability, and efficiency within the context of government and non-profit public service programs.

  Indirect Measures: Alumni Survey, Student Exit Survey, focus groups

Competency 4: Synthesizing, thinking critically, solving problems and making decisions (KU1, KU3, KU4)

- SLO 4.A: Displays the ability to independently analyze managerial issues and make policy recommendations

  Direct Measures: Thesis, analytical papers, evaluation by internship field instructor

- SLO 4.B: Understands the managerial processes necessary to analyze issues identify potential solutions and decide on a course of action

  Direct Measures: Portfolios, case analyses, analytical papers and examinations

  Indirect Measures: Student Exit Survey, Alumni Survey

Competency 5: To participate in and contribute to the public policy process (KU3, KU4)

- SLO 5.A: Identify and explain the institutional, structural, economic, legal, political, ethical and democratic context of policy making at all levels of government

  Direct Measure: Portfolio of policy proposals

  Indirect Measure: Student Exit Survey
• SLO 5.B: Demonstrate the ability to analyze policy options with the use of quantitative tools and other appropriate methods

  Direct Measures: Thesis, student portfolios

  Indirect Measures: Student Exit Survey, Alumni Survey

• SLO 5.C: Valuing collaboration, teamwork, negotiation and compromise among organizations, in government and the non-profit and business sectors

  Indirect Measures: Alumni Survey, Student Exit Survey

**KU Student Outcomes (KU):**

*Kean University graduates should be able to:*

1. Think critically, creatively and globally;
2. Adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments;
3. Serve as active and contributing members of their communities; and
4. Advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines (GE) and enhance their skills in professional areas