DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Master of Public Administration

The Master of Public Administration Program (MPA Program) is a broad-based degree designed to prepare students for leadership roles in public organizations. The MPA Program emphasizes the critical areas of political institutions and processes, managerial and leadership concepts and skills, and analytical skills and techniques. It is anchored in both theory and application for those seeking to leverage their career progress and enhance their leadership potential.

The MPA Program is intended for practicing and aspiring administrators in public sector organizations, and is also an excellent degree for those in non-profit and voluntary sectors, and in private organizations that interact consistently with public agencies or which maintain government or public affairs offices. The degree also is useful for those whose career paths may move across sectors over a period of time. The degree—while based solidly in research and theory—emphasizes the practical application of modern technical, managerial, and leadership skills in a variety of settings.

For those currently in administrative and managerial positions, the MPA Program will help refine, update, and improve career potential and help add value to performance. For pre-service individuals, the program is an excellent way to build the educational foundation for a career in management and leadership.

This graduate program is devoted to public management and also committed to serving the needs of those whose careers are invested in the work of non-profit organizations and private sector organizations that have public interest linkages. Given its emphasis on management, the program is multi-disciplinary and involves a significant mix of disciplines, all of which contribute to the value of the program for individual students. This multi-disciplinary quality, along with its public management base, is a significant and unique strength of the MPA Program and degree.

The MPA program faculty is a distinguished, experienced group representing various disciplines. The core discipline of the program is public administration. Contributing disciplines include business administration, criminal justice, computer science, economics, health administration, and political science. Other disciplines contribute to the MPA Program on an occasional basis. All members of the MPA Program faculty hold the earned doctoral degree and bring to their courses and other work in the program a sound record of experience in government, business, research, and consulting. Students in the MPA Program benefit greatly from work in graduate courses taught from a variety of disciplinary perspectives offered by the faculty, and from the emphasis by the faculty on a blend of theory and practical management and leadership skills.

Student Learning Objectives

The MPA Program uses the following student learning objectives:

a. Understand the general principles, concepts, theories and models of public administration within the context of American federalism
b. Understand the major principles, concepts, theories, and models associated with the fundamental knowledge areas of public administration
c. Understand the concepts, theories, models, and analytical approaches associated with administrative processes, including decision making, budgeting, and strategic management
d. Understand and be able to employ in applied research settings the major research design models, standard quantitative and qualitative techniques, and analytical approaches for addressing administrative issues and questions
e. Be able to apply concepts, theories, theories, analytical approaches associated with major sub field concentrations, including criminal justice, emergency management, health care administration, public financial management, and public management
f. Be able to present written and spoken information in an effective manner
g. Design and complete a research-based professional paper or thesis project demonstrating the ability to employ the appropriate knowledge base, research design, and data collection and analysis techniques focusing on an appropriate administrative issue or topic.