

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO TERMINATE THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM  
AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Action Requested:** Consider recommending approval of the request by Iowa State University to terminate the Master of Public Administration Program in the Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The request to terminate the Program resulted from reduced funding and inability to hire appropriate faculty to maintain accreditation. This request was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of program.** The Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program is designed to educate students for careers in management and policy analysis at the federal, state, and local levels of government and in nonprofit sector management. The curriculum covers a broad range of public administration and policy topics, including organizational and administrative processes, eGovernment, leadership, organizational change dynamics, human resource management, budgeting, cost benefit analysis, financial management, policy analysis, and ethics. The program offers three concentrations – Public Management, eGovernment and Management of Information Technology, and Policy Analysis. The program requires 37 credits, which includes 15 credits in the core competency; nine credits in one of the concentration areas; four credits in other required courses; up to seven credits of electives; and three credits of a creative component (capstone) or a minimum of three credits of research (thesis).

The program also offers a Graduate Certificate of Public Management, which requires 15 credits – nine on the core and two additional courses in the area of student interest. The program also offers joint master’s degrees with the Department of Community and Regional Planning and the interdisciplinary Information Assurance Program. The minimum requirement for all double degrees consists of 22 credits from each discipline for a total of 54 credits.

- ◇ **Reason for proposed termination.** Funds are not available to recruit and retain full-time faculty to staff the five faculty positions required for accreditation of the program through the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.
- ◇ **Impact of proposed termination on programming.** A survey was conducted of students currently enrolled in the graduate program. The survey respondents included 50 students in the MPA program; 13 in the Master of Arts Program; and one student in the joint MPA/Master of Community and Regional Planning Program.

The majority of respondents (65.5%) indicated that they preferred to complete the current MPA program; 17.2% indicated they preferred to complete an MA degree with an existing program focus; 12.5% indicated they preferred to complete an MA degree with the new public policy focus; and 4.7% indicated they would leave ISU to pursue a graduate degree at a different institution. Therefore, the department expects current students to complete their program with a minimum loss of ISU students to other institutions following the proposed termination of the program.

- ◇ Three-year trend of enrollments and graduations. It was unclear what the total enrollment was between 2008 and 2012; only the number of new students was provided for that time period. The Fall 2013 enrollment appears to be nine; the Spring 2014 is seven. It appears that there are “strong” enrollments in MPA courses. During the past five years, there were 77 graduates; the annual average number of graduates was 15.
  
- ◇ Impact on resources. The phase-out costs will include \$6,000 per course offered by temporary faculty to fulfill degree requirements for students remaining in the MPA program and approximately \$13,000 in personnel costs for graduate research assistant support to meet reporting requirements for termination. Front office staff time has been diverted from other tasks. A reduction in revenue from graduate tuition and fees is expected as the program termination is implemented.  
  
Cost savings will occur at both faculty and student levels. Faculty resources will be available to teach higher enrollment undergraduate courses and to offer graduate courses in the revised graduate program. Fewer temporary faculty will be required. Graduate assistantship funds currently assigned to MPA students will be available to attract students into the revised graduate program.
  
- ◇ Impact on workforce. Upon termination of ISU’s program, a Master of Public Administration Program will only be available at Drake University. This may result in some reduction in the total number of MPA-credentialed graduates from Iowa programs to fill pertinent positions in the state.
  
- ◇ Alternative programming. The Department of Political Science is in the process of developing an option in the Master of Arts Program in Political Science. The graduate program will include a track in public policy as well as the existing tracks in international relations, comparative politics, and American politics. The track is expected to be implemented before the current students in the Master of Public Administration Program complete their program of study. Once the new option is available, students will have the opportunity to choose between completing their MPA program and moving into the new degree option without loss of credits. New students in this field will have the option to select the track option. Prospective students will also have the option to select UNI’s Master of Public Policy Program.
  
- ◇ Effect on current students. Phasing out of the program is expected to take at least three years from the Fall 2013 entry of the final cohort although the exact number of currently enrolled students was unclear. If the program is terminated in Spring 2014, the program phase-out will be completed by Spring 2016.

The Department of Political Science has indicated that it will not be possible to guarantee the continued availability of all courses currently offered by the department and from which students may select to satisfy degree requirements for the program. As the new program option in political science becomes available, current faculty resources and graduate student funding will be repositioned to address the needs of students in the new program option. Accommodations will be made to assist MPA students fulfill their degree requirements, including the use of courses offered by other departments and programs at ISU and the transfer within the usual limit of nine credit hours of relevant graduate credits from other accredited institutions.

- ◇ Effective date of termination. If the proposed program termination is approved by the Board, suspension of admissions to the program will become effective immediately and will be reflected on the department website and University Catalog. Termination of the program will become effective upon completion of the program by the students who are currently enrolled and/or a determination is made about their intention to complete the program within a three-year period.