

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
MASTER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa for a Master of Public Affairs in the Graduate College.

The Council of Provosts and Board office support approval of this program.

Background:

Description of proposed program. The proposed Public Affairs (MPA) program will require 42 semester hours and be accredited by the NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration). This will coalesce and expand the University of Iowa's offerings in public affairs by establishing an interdisciplinary graduate professional program that builds upon the already strong foundation that exists at the university in teaching, research and service. The plan is to offer the program at the UI campus in Iowa City. This is not an online degree, but it is expected that selected courses will be offered online. Of the 10 core courses in the degree, the program expects to offer three (30 percent) online. Of the total of 51 courses expected to be offered, the program expects 12 (24 percent) will be offered online.

Academic objectives. The objective of the MPA program is to prepare or advance student knowledge, skills and values pertinent to efficiency, effectiveness and equity in the development of public policies and the management of public and non-profit organizations.

Need for proposed program. Given that there are currently no accredited degree opportunities in Iowa, communities wishing to hire a graduate of an accredited MPA program must typically recruit individuals from out of state who have attended schools such as the University of Kansas or Northern Illinois University. Smaller communities in Iowa find it very difficult to recruit city managers, as they have to attract individuals to relocate to a small town in a state in which they have never lived. Survey respondents from these smaller communities reported that they may have to make two or three offers before they successfully land a candidate. Consequently, if Iowa is not able to educate and retain its residents as public affairs professionals, it will have a very difficult time attracting the talent that is required to manage our governments and nonprofits. Moreover, employment in local governments is affected by the ongoing retirement of baby boomers which increases openings.

There are many individuals in local government in Iowa, whether they be city administrators, city clerks, police chiefs, or regional planners who would benefit from a graduate degree in management and policy-making. Even though Iowa does not enjoy rapid population growth, the level of responsibility its communities, large and small, face continues to increase, and consequently the educational requirements for local government administration multiply as well.

The degree will also be of value to individuals in the fast growing nonprofit sector, which comprises 11 percent of state employment. The nonprofit sector plays an increasingly important role in overseeing key programs that benefit the public. Nationwide, universities that offer the MPA degree have recognized the need to provide instruction in nonprofit management and philanthropy. Many MPA programs have demonstrated their nimbleness by expanding their degree offerings from more traditional public administration to also include nonprofit management. Finally, with the growth of the field of public administration in other regions, particularly Asia, there are opportunities to engage in productive joint and dual degree partnerships with foreign

universities. Such partnerships are quite common among schools of public affairs in the US and will provide an opportunity to enrich student learning at a more global scale.

Link to institutional strategic plan. “Create a university ecosystem that enables UI to be an international leader in confronting the grand challenges of the 21st Century.” (2016-2021 University of Iowa Strategic Plan) Now more evident in the second decade of the 21st century, one of the enduring grand challenges is how we collectively, creatively, and democratically respond to key challenges facing communities, the nation and the world. Among these challenges are an increased incidence and intensity of disasters such as flooding, sea level rise, and wildfires; rising temperatures; health care; aging; addiction; inadequate infrastructure; inequality; demographic change; racism; immigration; and public safety. Many if not all, of these are issues are being researched and taught at the University of Iowa.

It is vital to the university, and the state of Iowa, to be a place where scholars and students come together to prepare the next generation of public policy leaders for meeting these grand challenges in the world. Universities are training scientists and social scientists to research the grand challenges, but they must also train leaders who are informed by research on the grand challenges, to lead public and nonprofit entities.

The UI has the necessary ingredients to constitute an important public affairs center for both education and research. Public institutions can (and should) play an important role in the debates and discussions over public policies that address these issues at all levels—local, state, regional, national and international. With its interdisciplinary public affairs infrastructure—e.g., Colleges of Law and Public Health, Schools of Urban and Regional Planning and Social Work, Departments of Political Science, Sociology, and Civil and Environmental Learning, as well as the Public Policy Center and the Larned Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center, the UI is uniquely positioned to become a leader in public affairs locally and nationally. With the creation of a master’s degree in public affairs, the University will take a bold move toward educating public affairs leaders who will creatively and knowledgeably address society’s most critical issues.

Relationship to existing programs at the institution. There is no duplication of any existing degree programs. Instead, the MPA degree will coalesce and complement existing public affairs-related degree and certificate programs in Urban and Regional Planning, Health Policy and Management, Social Work, Political Science, Strategic Communications, Non-Profit Management, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Law and will include interdisciplinary coursework offered to the MPA Program by Urban and Regional Planning, Political Science, Health Management and Policy, Management and Organizations (including Non-Profit Management), Strategic Communications, and Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. There is currently no NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration) accredited MPA or MPP (Master of Public Policy) degree in the State of Iowa that is available to full-time students. Iowa State University had an accredited program (Master of Public Administration) but with the approval of the Board of Regents (2014), ISU discontinued the program only 10 years after receiving NASPAA accreditation. The University of Northern Iowa has a part-time, online only Masters of Public Policy degree that is available to students enrolling in odd-numbered years. UNI is currently seeking accreditation for this program. It submitted its eligibility application in April 2019. If it is approved to proceed, it will be accredited sometime in 2021 or 2022.

Drake and Upper Iowa Universities offer an unaccredited master’s degrees in public administration.

Unique features. The University of Iowa is a large Research I university that includes many departments and units whose faculty teach and do research in various public affairs areas.

The University of Iowa features significant community engagement programs run through its Office of Outreach and Engagement and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC). IISC works with students and faculty across the campus on course-based projects that benefit communities throughout the state as well as student educational experiences. Through the capstone project of the MPA degree, students will work closely with IISC and Iowa communities to develop policies and programs that will improve governance and quality of life in Iowa.

Other special features on the University of Iowa campus that make it desirable, unique, and appropriate to house an MPA program are:

- The Iowa Public Policy Center—The Public Policy Center (PPC) is an important presence for public affairs on the University of Iowa campus. Its activities focus on research and the sponsorship of public forums with guest speakers (<http://ppc.uiowa.edu/>) that will be available to students in the MPA program. The PPC is a major forum through which much public affairs research is conducted on the UI campus. PPC associated faculty and staff conduct research in health care, crime and justice, environmental policy, politics, and social and education policy.
- Urban and Regional Planning—The School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) provides a core of faculty trained and committed to public affairs teaching and research.
- SURP faculty are trained in public policy as well as planning and teach courses that could comprise core courses in a public affairs master's degree, including microeconomics for policy analysis, methods for policy analysis, and public finance and budgeting.
- Political Science faculty members also provide a core of faculty trained and committed to public policy teaching and research.
- Political Science faculty offer a number of courses in public policy at the graduate level, which can fulfill major requirements and electives in a public affairs master's degree.
- Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center (INRC)—Waterman is the statewide center for service and instruction in managing nonprofits. INRC provides important learning opportunities for people engaged and interested in nonprofit work

Resources to establish a high-quality program. The MPA program will be administered by the UI School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP). SURP's location in the Graduate College gives it the ability to administer an interdisciplinary graduate degree program. An interdisciplinary program entails interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration of at least two units. In this case, the primary partnership is between Political Science and Urban and Regional Planning, but there are also collaborations with the master's program in Strategic Communications (Journalism and Mass Communications) and coursework housed in the departments of Management and Organization, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Health Policy. A steering committee consisting of faculty from these units will oversee the overall program and ensure that it maintains high standards.

SURP currently has seven full-time faculty members and one part-time faculty member. To meet minimum requirements for accreditation, NASPAA requires that there be at least five full-time faculty members. Faculty do not need to be full-time in the MPA program, but must be full-time in the institution (the University of Iowa) and must be "exerting substantial determining influence over the program." Among SURP faculty are two tenured faculty with Ph.Ds. in public policy (Qian and Nguyen) and four faculty (Anthony, Connerly, Laurian, Spears) with doctoral degrees in urban and regional planning with a strong emphasis on public policy. In addition, there is a seventh

faculty member, with a Ph.D. in atmospheric science, who is also expert in environmental policy and modeling dynamic systems. These faculty will comprise what NASPAA calls the “faculty nucleus” that must be at least five in number (NASPAA standard 2.2).

The MPA program will be overseen by SURP’s DEO and the Public Affairs Program Director. Staffing for admissions, curriculum development, advising and career development will be handled by current SURP faculty and staff who perform these duties for the Urban and Regional Planning master’s degree. The Public Affairs Program Director, associate professor Phuong Nguyen, is ideally qualified as he has a master’s degree in public policy from Duke University and a Ph.D. in public administration from Syracuse University.

No new special equipment or space will be required.

Student demand. The program projects that fifteen new students will enroll in the MPA program each year. We expect that some of these will be part-time students who currently are working full-time. Nevertheless, the program expects at least half of the 15 students will be full-time students and all of them will be recruited from similar research institutions with academic rigor.

Many of the recruited students will come from a variety of undergraduate degree programs, especially Political Science. Currently, there are about 500 undergraduate students majoring in Political Science at the University of Iowa. This number excludes those primarily interested in international relations. Of the 500, the Political Science interim DEO, estimates that 10 percent are interested in careers in city government and probably 20 percent are interested in some type of master’s program in policy, administration or public affairs, especially at the local level and that many of them would like to remain in Iowa. This translates into approximately 25 students per year of which the program hopes to recruit 10 into the MPA program. The probability of accomplishing this will increase upon expected development of an Undergraduate to Graduate program that will enable Political Science majors to complete both degrees in five years.

Workforce need/demand. According to the Center for State and Local Government Excellence, the number of general administration positions in local government began to grow again after 2013 after declining in the period from 2008 through 2012. In state government, the decline that ended in 2012 has been followed by a leveling off in employment. See <https://slge.org/assets/uploads/2018/10/workforce-of-the-future-oct-2018.pdf>

Looking forward, the Center for State and Local Government Excellence projects that national employment in state government is expected to grow by 3.8 percent by 2026 and by 7.4 percent in local government. For manager positions, the expected growth over the same period is 2.5 percent in state government and 6.1 percent in local government. See <https://slge.org/assets/uploads/2018/10/infographic-workforcetrends2026.pdf>

Even though the number of jobs may slowly increase, this does not mean that the number of openings, or that the supply of professionals to fill those openings, is steady. With the continuing retirement of baby boomers, the number of open positions will increase—this is called the “silver tsunami”, which has been observed in state and local public employment since at least 2014.

This is certainly the case in city management in Iowa, where the number of annual vacancies in city management positions is between 24 and 31 over the past three years and the number of qualified applicants for city management positions has changed over the last 10-20 years from 10 to 15 to three to five. In other words, the demand for city managers in Iowa is high, but the number of qualified applicants has declined. This information is obtained from Callahan Municipal Consultants in which the principal reports on his decades of experience as a municipal consultant

in Iowa. He attributes the increased number of city management openings to the retirement of baby boomers and welcomes the increase in qualified applicants that will be generated by an MPA degree at Iowa.

Cost. Part-time adjunct faculty will be hired to teach courses in public management, organizational dynamics and leadership, public human resource management and strategic management. Existing classroom facilities for instruction, including online instruction, are currently available

	COSTS (year 1 & year 2)	TOTAL COSTS
Faculty	\$30,000	
Total Yearly Cost (Year 1)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 2)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 3)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 4)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 5)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 6)		\$30,000
Total Yearly Cost (Year 7)		\$30,000

Projected student enrollment.

	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Y 7
Graduate	15	30	38	45	45	45	45

Accreditation. NASPAA accredits master's degree programs in public affairs, public administration, and public policy. One set of accreditation criteria drives each of these degree names—consequently, with regard to accreditation, the choice of degree name does not matter.

The path to accreditation began with 1) attendance at the annual Accreditation Institute on October 10, 2018 and will continue with 2) obtaining membership in NASPAA. From there the program will enter a 23-month (minimum) accreditation process that includes 1) applying for accreditation eligibility, 2) preparing a self-study, and 3) entering an accreditation cohort by responding to an interim report and hosting a site visit. During this time, the program will inform current and prospective students of our intent to seek accreditation and progress in the accreditation process. Because NASPAA accreditation is not retroactive, we will not be able to promise pre-accreditation students that if the MPA program is accredited after they graduate that they will be considered to have graduated from an accredited MPA program.

Evaluation plan. Because the MPA program is seeking accreditation and because NASPAA requires annual measurement of goals and learning objectives, this program will be under continuous review. In addition, like all programs under the University of Iowa's new budget model, enrollments and associated budgets are regularly tracked to ensure they are meeting targets.

Date of implementation. Upon approval by the Board of Regents.

Letters of Support

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean
202 Catt Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-1301
515 294-3220
FAX 515 294-1303

May 22, 2019

Charles Connerly
Professor and Director
School of Urban and Regional Planning
Founder, Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316

Dear Professor Connerly,

Thank you for reaching out to the Political Science Department at Iowa State University to share your plans to propose a Master of Public Affairs degree program at the University of Iowa and to apply for accreditation through the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. As noted in the proposal, Iowa State discontinued its accredited Master of Public Administration program in 2014, so there is no direct duplication in this proposal. Both of our campuses offer an MA in political science and ISU's program includes a concentration area in public policy.

We appreciate your collaboration with our Department of Political Science in the development of the proposal. We agree that the program's home in the School of Urban & Regional Planning, its interdisciplinary focus and its goal of enrolling full-time graduate students in largely face-to-face courses, distinguishes it from efforts on our campus. Given the evident strengths of the University of Iowa with initiatives such as the Iowa Public Policy Center, the Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center, and the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities, your university is well situated to develop a distinctive MPA program that will prepare future leaders to respond to the many challenges faced by our communities.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was glad to review the proposal. We look forward to future faculty and student collaborations in the area of public affairs. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Amy R. Slagell
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
202 Catt Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011
(515) 294-7270

Department of Political Science



May 24, 2019

Dr. Charles Connerly
Professor and Director
School of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1315

Dear Dr. Connerly:

Thank you for sharing your plans for a new Master of Public Affairs program. We appreciate the collegial discussions we've had over the last several months as we worked to address some of the overlap between the proposed program and UNI's longstanding Master of Public Policy (MPP) program.

We remain concerned that there is insufficient need within the state to support new enrollment. However, your program's focus on recruiting full-time students, its location on campus in Iowa City, and its limitation of online course offerings to about 30 percent of the program minimize the duplication with our online MPP program. Given that you have memorialized these intentions clearly within your formal Board of Regents Form A document, we have no objection to the proposal and we hope to continue working together to ensure that the programs are distinct enough to help meet all students' needs while avoiding duplication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Scott Peters".

C. Scott Peters
Professor and Department Head

Cc: Brenda Bass, Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Patrick Pease, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs



Department of Health, Recreation, and Community Services

May 28, 2019

Dr. Charles Connerly
Professor and Director
School of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1315

Dear Dr. Connerly,

Thank you for sharing your new program plans with the University of Northern Iowa. Your proposed master's degree in Public Affairs clearly expands your program and complements your existing public affairs-related degree and certificate programs. We do have some concerns that marketing this program to individuals in the nonprofit sector, as noted in the proposal, could negatively impact enrollments in our online Master's Degree in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Development program. However, given your focus on recruiting students directly from your undergraduate degree programs and offering classes that are mostly on-campus, we support your proposal and wish you success.

Sincerely,

Julianne Gassman, PhD
Association Professor and Director of Community Engagement

Cc: Gaetane Jean-Marie, Dean, College of Education
Kent Johnson, Dean, Continuing Education and Special Programs
Patrick Pease, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs