



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

Date: May 26, 2015

To: John Stoll, Chair Public and Environmental Affairs

From: Scott Furlong, Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Re: Report on the Environmental Policy and Planning and Public Administration
Program Review

Public and Environmental Affairs is responsible for two interdisciplinary majors, Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP) and Public Administration (PA). These two programs are reviewed together because of the overlap of faculty and courses between the two programs. The Public Administration program studies public and nonprofit organizations and focuses on issues of management, policy, and politics. At present, it is the only undergraduate PA program in the UWS. The Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP) program is a social science based environmental studies program that focuses on policy and planning issues. There has been significant faculty change since the last program review due to retirements and resignations. The effect is that about half of the current faculty within PEA have only been here for three years or less. Not counting myself, there is also only one full professor in the unit, and there is a need to add an outside member to the executive committee in order to get the number up to five. Be that as it may, the programs have hired a talented and productive group of assistant professors (two of which were graduates of the undergraduate program). In addition, some of the retired faculty continue to maintain ties with the programs and university through teaching. The faculty provide a significant level of support for the disciplinary majors in Political Science, Economics, and the minor in Geography. In addition, it is one of two programs that participates in the Environmental Science and Policy graduate program. The faculty in the program also supply a significant amount of general education for the campus

Enrollment Trends/Resource Issues:

Enrollments in the EPP major are down since the last review and particularly since 2010 (from 70 to 37). This program has often been a bit cyclical but it is an area of concern that the unit should pay attention to. Minors are also down in this area from a high of 33 to 18. The trend in the number of majors has not yet shown itself in the number of graduates, which has stayed relatively steady. The PA major has grown a bit since the last review getting to a high of 87 students in 2013. Minors, though, have been decreasing. I would expect that this may be due to students picking up a double major in PA rather than a minor who may be political science or EPP majors.

Efforts to improve enrollment in both programs (but particularly in EPP) should continue. The EPP program is important for UWGB's institutional and historical environmental mission. Efforts to potentially put the PA program online, could also improve enrollments in this area. There would appear to be potential opportunities particularly in growing the area of nonprofit management.

The AAC notes that the "Administration" should work to reduce faculty turnover in EPP. In almost all cases, the turnover has been due to retirements and in one case a movement to administration. Two resignations occurred but in both cases these were due to personal/family issues. The current faculty are poised to make their own mark on both the EPP and PA programs and the executive committee and I are hopeful about these rebuilding efforts.

Assessment:

Both programs use embedded assessment methods, student surveys, and internship evaluations as a means of evaluating their student learning outcomes. The methods used are sound, but the unit notes there is some inconsistency in the collection of the data. Both programs are instituting a capstone class, which may provide opportunities to better institutionalized the assessment process into the programs. Learning outcomes for both programs are fine. I would suggest a bit more clarity on the first one for both programs. For example, in the PA major the first learning outcome is stated as "Have the skills necessary to be an engaged citizen". It would be useful to provide additional information on what these skills are. In addition, the idea of "have the skills" may need to be expressed in a more definitive way (e.g., Learn and demonstrate the skills). This issue is similar in the EPP Learning Outcome #1. The Human Development program has spent some time recently using their internship evaluations as an assessment tool and it may be worthwhile to discuss this issue with them given the importance of internships in both the PA and EPP programs.

The EPP Alumni results do show some areas in need of improvement, but there are only seven (7) respondents so it's difficult to draw conclusions. Some of the faculty turnover may be the basis for some of these results. I would suggest that the unit put some effort into discussing these issues.

Curriculum Development:

Since its last review there have been some changes to the PA major. The self-study describes what the unit wants to do as it moves forward. Changes to be implemented in 2015/16 include:

- Reducing the number of electives and adding courses from other parts of campus;
- Eliminating the areas of emphasis and just offering the one PA major;
- Adding a Human Resources course that will likely replace the Leadership class.

Similarly, the faculty have made suggestions for the EPP major:

- Develop and use the First Year Seminars that are more closely related to the program and to serve as a potential recruitment tool;
- Reduce the number of electives to preserve the core program;
- Emphasize the applied aspects of the EPP program;

The unit has been working with the Adult Degree program to develop emphases options for the Integrative Leadership Studies major. It is also considering offering the PA major as an online program. Finally, the PA program put in for an entitlement to offer an MPA degree. UWS did not want to provide an entitlement and suggested we work with UW-Oshkosh on a potential collaboration. It is also working toward the development of a graduate level certificate in Emergency Management.

In the area of EPP, the program worked with other units across the university to develop a different model for teaching GIS. This was implemented about a year ago and continues to evolve and be evaluated.

Other Issues:

Toward the end of the 2015 academic year, I let the faculty in PEA and URS know that I would like them to move forward with a merger of these two units. There were a number of reasons for this including potential curricular and personnel coherence, the ability to strengthen both units, as well as some minor budgetary issues. Faculty began discussions regarding the merger and this will continue in the Fall 2015.

Both programs have strong and important internship opportunities. The efforts that led to the Great Lakes Grant has been an important way to show growth in the internship program and also provide additional resources to students.

The faculty are very student centered and innovative in the classroom. They excel in providing high impact experiences within their curriculum.

In summary, the unit notes that the major concern they have relates to enrollment issues particularly in the EPP program. The past few years has included major transitions in the faculty within PEA and they are now building toward a strong faculty body that are active in the classroom, scholarship, and service. The proposed merger with URS will likely cause some initial strains, but could ultimately strengthen all programs.

Cc: Franklin Chen and Steve Kimball, Co-Chairs, Academic Affairs Council
Greg Davis, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

