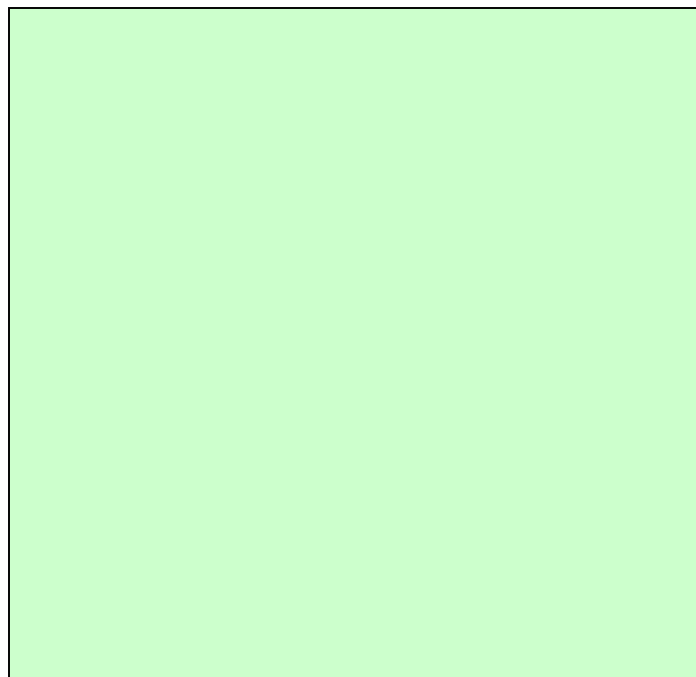




# **MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**-be the change you wish to see in the world**

**Annual Report  
2004.2005**



## **HISTORY**

The MPA program at Evergreen was founded in 1980. In 2002, the program underwent a major redesign, the first since the program began. We now offer three areas of concentration: public and nonprofit administration, public policy (emphasizing health policy) and tribal governance (a separate student cohort). The MPA program has been designed to meet the needs of our students by giving them greater choice not only in the concentration areas, but also in the length of time to complete the program. Some students may choose to complete the program within two years, while others may choose three to four years. Classes meet in the evening, on Saturdays and in intensive weekend formats.

The MPA program consists of 60 quarter-credit hours. Students take two years of Core (4 hours/quarter), typically with their cohort, and 36 hours of electives (two additional courses are required for those taking the policy concentration), culminating in a 4 hour Capstone (or optional thesis).

Academic year (AY) 04-05 was the first year after our changes in which we had enough students from various cohorts to have a sense of stability in enrollments. Each year, we admit a cohort of 45 students in the general MPA program; every other year we admit a cohort of tribal students, two cohorts have been admitted since the inception of the tribal concentration. For general students, roughly 2/3rds will graduate in about two years; close to 100% of tribal students graduate in two years. One third of general students will continue on and take 3 or 4 years to graduate. Therefore, we serve students from a mix of cohorts: first years; second years; tribal and those who are taking longer to complete their degrees. We admitted our first cohort under the new model in AY 01-02; in AY 04-05, we had students from 4 cohorts enrolling.

In addition to serving students from various MPA cohorts, our electives also serve special students, MES students and undergraduates.

## **AY 04.05 ACCOMPLISHMENTS – SERVING STUDENTS**

***Enrollment:*** This past year was a remarkable year for our program: the program served over 100 MPA students last year. In addition, the last two years we have closed admissions in early spring – a stark contrast to years past when admissions stayed open well into September. For AY 05-06, we had 78 applicants; we admitted 51 (45 + waitlist + tribal additions), 46 have paid their deposit and plan to attend this fall.

Table 1 shows the considerable increases in enrollment experienced by the program over the last several years, associated with the changes in the program structure and the addition of the tribal concentration. The State of Washington's Higher Education Coordinating Board (HEC Board) measures graduate student enrollments in state institution using a "Full Time Equivalent" (FTE) standard. A student enrolled in 10 graduate credits per quarter is considered full-time. As indicated in Table 1, when we take into account all the other students we are now serving in the program, our FTEs (average headcount FTEs) are improving over time. We are serving many more students today, as compared to before the changes in the program were implemented (119 students were enrolled in the MPA program in AY 04-05 compared to about 60 students in AY 01-02). In addition, we are serving significantly more undergraduates than we did before we made the program changes.

**TABLE 1**

	AY 00.01	AY 01.02	AY 02.03	AY 03.04	AY 04.05
State Goals: Average state- defined FTE*	47	48.5	67.1	62.4	68.3
Average FTE** served by curriculum	57	51.9	73.3	75.0	77.4
# Undergrads in classes (could be double counted)	?	5	20	31	27
# MPA students in program/Fall quarter	65	62	101	104	119
# Degrees conferred	26	23	27	24	est. 27

\* state supported MPA students only.

\*\* Includes all students, grad and undergrad, in all program (including contracts); does not include MPA students enrolled in MES electives and undergrad courses.

The HEC Board also sets enrollment goals for state supported graduate programs. The goal for the general MPA cohort is 55 FTEs; the tribal cohort, 25 FTEs. As shown in Table 2, for the general cohort, we are performing at 95% of expectations – the 2.6 average FTE gap represents only 5 more students taking 4 more hours/quarter or a recapturing of waiver students (primarily TESC employees) in order to make them count toward FTE goals.

Tribal numbers are lower (64% of expectations) but this reflects a slower recruitment start up for this cohort. We believe that tribal FTEs will increase with the next cohort in 2006-08.

Permanent funding for the program and the addition of a Tribal cohort Associate Coordinator is expected are help tremendously. There is a particular challenge for tribal FTEs as the design of the program (weekend intensives) and the far-flung locations of these students makes it difficult for tribal students to take more than 8 hours/quarter which means that the size of the each cohort will have to be larger than 25 in order to meet state-defined FTEs. Creative scheduling will also help.

**TABLE 2  
FTE BREAKDOWN FOR AY 04.05**

AY 04.05	State Defined FTE	Actual FTE*	% State Defined
Non-tribal students	55	52.4	95%
Tribal students	25	15.9	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>85.3%</b>

\*MPA matriculated and special students only; does not include waivers, MES & undergrads

## WHAT ARE STUDENTS SAYING ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

We surveyed students in Mary 2005, asking them detailed questions about their perceptions of the program. The resulting student evaluation data show high levels of satisfaction with the program. The majority of students (89%) are very or somewhat satisfied with their experiences in the program (11% are somewhat or very dissatisfied). The majority would recommend the program to others (72% strongly recommend; 27% probably recommend).

Students tell us we are on mission when it comes to the following:

- Thinking critically
- Thinking creatively
- Thinking strategically
- Working collaboratively
- Advocating on behalf of the public interest
- Initiating social/organizational change
- Communicating effectively
- Working effectively in organizations
- Gathering and interpreting information

Students also tell us that we need to work on the following aspects of our mission, with regard to translating them into the classroom:

- Advocating for socially just programs and practices
- Implementing socially just programs and practices
- Embracing diversity
- Valuing fairness and equity
- Managing people
- Managing resources
- Working with different sectors

Student feedback on ways to improve the program is consistent with faculty experiences and include:

- Increasing breadth and diversity of perspectives represented in classroom – readings, faculty, and students.
- Improve scheduling and communication about scheduling to students.
- Improve advising.
- Improve team relationships among faculty.
- Improve stability in faculty staffing.

“I love this program, improve planning of electives, develop strategy for team teaching (work as team).”

“The program has given me the unexpected attribute of confidence. You asked nothing about researching, reading or writing. These three attributes have increased tremendously for me.”

“Don't be afraid to do more TESC style learning just because we're a P.A. graduate program. Be brave.”

“I hope this program becomes less self conscious about its liberal/progressive reputation. It's what distinguishes you and it is why I came.”

“I love school/learning. Thank you.”

“Great people - doing great things for community!”

“The MPA-tribal governance is a perfect compliment to my career. The class size for the cohort is good. I also benefit from the class schedule (weekend). I am thankful for the opportunity, despite the workload.”

## **AY 04.05 ACCOMPLISHMENTS – SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

One of the goals of the program is to serve the community and to serve as a strong link in the town/gown relationship. We excelled this year in this goal, sponsoring a well-attended symposium in March entitled “The State of the State Worker: Positive Strategies for Organizational Change” and co-sponsoring with MES a spring symposium on scientific and public integrity. We also sponsored a session in January, facilitated by Nita Rinehart, on Effective Communication with Legislators that raised money for the MPA scholarship fund.

We are actively working with the new Dean of Extended Education on a model we will pilot in Fall, 2005 which combines symposia and 2 credit short courses for both MPA and extended education students. During AY 04-05 we developed three short courses in conjunction with Extended Education that were cancelled due to low enrollment. After analyzing the experience, we learned significant lessons about how to market such programs and plan to use this information in our future efforts.

As part of our work, MPA faculty make commitments to public service, serving the community and our various academic disciplines through pro bono consulting work, public intellectual activities (invited talks, guest lectures, letters to the editor, etc.), traditional academic scholarship including publications (books and journal articles), acting as referees for peer-reviewed journals, sitting on editorial boards for journals and on various professional committees, and attending conferences. MPA faculty were very busy this past year, continuing to promote our program and our work in our public service activities. Next year, the MPA program is the site host for two international public administration conferences – the Public Administration Theory Network and the annual Public Administration Teaching Conference.

## **CHALLENGES**

Our largest, and most consistent, challenge is to achieve administrative and faculty hiring stability such that we can offer and plan our curriculum consistently and regularly (and communicate this to students) and maintain an active rotation strategy. While this will always be a challenge given the vagaries of faculty scheduling (leaves of absence, sabbaticals, rotation patterns, retirements and resignations, etc), we have enough years of enrollment data to now know what it takes to offer a quality curriculum. Even with a significant increase in headcount, students served, an addition of another cohort (tribal) and an explosive expansion of the curriculum, total faculty lines have only increased by 1.42 since the program changed (5.25 faculty in AY 01-02; 6.67 lines in AY 05-06). There is significant evidence to indicate that the program remains understaffed even at 6.67 lines; more work needs to be done in the next academic year to better understand appropriate staffing levels, including analyzing the Director’s workload as this job had grown far beyond a half-time position.

Hiring another full-time faculty member to teach with the tribal cohort and a full-time Associate Coordinator to work with the tribal track will add additional stability. Still, the loss of faculty member Gail Johnson and our inability to automatically fill her position leaves us with a faculty pool of many visitors, especially for the next academic year.

Our second challenge is to continue to work with administration to determine the best way to “count” student FTEs, to ensure that we meet the state requirements without sacrificing quality.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

While the MPA team for AY 05.06 has yet to meet to determine their agenda for the year, there are a few items that are likely to be included:

- 1) Curriculum planning – move toward a two-year plan with faculty making two-year, at a minimum, commitments.
- 2) Continue to work with administration to clarify the program, how it serves students and the college and to continue work toward developing appropriate performance measures.
- 3) Faculty hiring/staffing – continue to work toward a more stable base that will allow students to feel a sense of ease and allows for a continual rotation strategy. Work to increase diversity of faculty. Hire tribal faculty member. Search for and appoint next Coordinator/Director.
- 4) Continue to work to improve relations within the campus community by participating in all-campus events, participating in faculty governance in faculty and planning unit meetings, volunteering to serve for various events, and “educating” our colleagues about what we do.
- 5) Accountability – do we have appropriate accountability processes for faculty and staff?
- 6) Administrative staffing and role clarity – how the Associate Coordinators (Directors) and Coordinator/Director work together and with the staff/faculty team to best deliver our programs. Revisit decision on title of Coordinator/Director. What is right load for Director?
- 7) Governance – policies and procedures for administering two cohorts; make changes to student and faculty handbooks.
- 8) Faculty teamwork – continuing to strengthen the faculty team. Actively support faculty teaching teams.
- 9) Marketing/PR – continue to work to improve our marketing and PR efforts including the bi-annual newsletter, advertising, and our publications.
- 10) Competition/Accreditation – stay aware of potential competition. Investigate the possibility of pursuing NASPAA accreditation, now that UW and Seattle University have been accredited.
- 11) Outreach/Extended Education – work with EE to pilot new models (fall symposia and short course and Winter conferences).
- 12) Budgeting – continue work began in Spring, 05 to decentralize MPA budgets, making the budget more transparent and more accessible to faculty. Clarify relationships between tribal and general budget and clarify how the tribal budget is managed (see #7).
- 13) Address the holes in our curriculum (already addressed in FY 05.06 schedule):
  - a. Specific techniques (management, budgeting, etc.)
  - b. Diversity/multiculturalism
- 14) Build a system to track students/alumni – work with the Development office to improve development opportunities; clarify budgeting processes to ensure MPA gifts (for scholarships, in particular) are tax deductible. Etc.
- 15) Continue work on fund-raising activities.
- 16) Continue to strengthen the relationships with the advisory board and strengthen reliance on board members for assistance in their areas of expertise.
- 17) Profit Center to support program – continue to investigate the possibilities of building for-profit ventures to provide fiscal and other support for the program.