

MPA CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

General Cohort

SPRING, 2012

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MEETING DATES: Most (but not all) Thursday evenings and Sunday, June 10.

GOALS: Reflection, Integration and Demonstration.

DESCRIPTION: Capstone is your opportunity to reflect upon, and integrate, the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) you've acquired throughout your MPA program. Using both Mahatma Gandhi's quote ("You must be the change you wish to see in the world"), which the MPA program takes as its tag line, and the mission of the MPA program (reprinted below), you will reflect upon and integrate your MPA experiences in a way that is meaningful for you as you define and practice public service. We ask you to reflect on your MPA experiences and revisit the KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) you believe you acquired in the program (either directly or indirectly). You will also reflect on value/goal shifts or changes that did or did not occur for you during your time in the program. Finally, you'll be asked how you are applying (in practice) the KSAs and changes (if any) in perspectives. You will demonstrate your knowledge, skills, abilities and understanding of public service through an applied demonstration project.

TESC MPA MISSION: Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We:

- *think* critically and creatively;
- *communicate* effectively;
- *work* collaboratively;
- *embrace* diversity;
- *value* fairness and equity;
- *advocate* powerfully on behalf of the public; and
- *imagine* new possibilities and accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.

The focus of this overview document is to get you working on the preparation work needed for your demonstration project. **THIS IS NOT A SYLLABUS.** A full syllabus for the class will be available later in Winter term. And, just because we are talking about it early does not make the demonstration project the most important component of Capstone. You need to hit the ground running on your project the first week of April, and there's a fair amount of work to be done before then to get you there. Thus this overview.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: The purpose of this project is to demonstrate to the program and the community what you've learned in your MPA program.

This project can take any form you wish, as long as it demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities you've gained in this program. It may be a research study, organizing a neighborhood, facilitation of a public meeting, a case study, an organizational assessment or intervention, a policy analysis, etc.

Examples of projects from other years include analyses of policy and implementation strategies in Washington state, program evaluations, organizing and facilitating community forums and grassroots organizing efforts, a pictorial analysis of homelessness in Olympia, a preparation of an annual report for an organization, applied research to support new strategies of governance, development of web-tools for organizations, community engagement work, an investigation of employee reward and recognition programs, curriculum/course development, more traditional research resulting in a publication, projects that supported Thurston County's United Way's community assessment, etc.

Projects must be about public service. Public service is defined very broadly to include efforts of governments, community-based organizations, citizens, nonprofits and political organizations (perhaps, even, private organizations doing public activities).

You may work on your projects individually or in teams but we strongly encourage teams. All teams must submit and complete an ***idea outline, proposal and a project contract before the beginning of Spring term.***

Projects must:

- 1) Produce an ***output*** of some kind (something tangible) as well as a written report/presentation on the process/production of the output;
- 2) Be ***outcome oriented*** – focus on making change or having an effect in some way;
- 3) Be ***MPA mission-centric*** (mission reprinted above) – e.g., represent KSAs learned/gained as they relate to all or part of the mission; and
- 4) Be ***applied*** – potential outcome in application in an agency, community, organization, discipline (for a traditional research paper, for example), etc.

Teams will meet with the sponsoring faculty member a minimum of four (4) times:

- 1) At least one time before spring term to finalize/approve contract (these may be done via email or phone)
- 2) Three times during Spring quarter: twice to check in and once to discuss presentation and final output.

The Idea Outline: submit to the faculty a short description of your project idea (think about using a one page memo format for this). **The deadline for the Idea Outline is February 2 (email to all three faculty).** If you are going to collect primary data or information from people, you'll need to indicate that you plan to do a Human Subjects Review at Evergreen and also at any participating organization (should it be required by that organization).

The Proposal: submitted to your sponsoring faculty member no later than **March 1 (we will assign sponsoring faculty after you submit the idea outline).** Between March 1 and April 5, teams will meet with the sponsoring faculty to revise and finalize proposals. Your proposal must be approved by your sponsoring faculty and approved with HSR, if applicable, before the first Thursday of class in Spring term, April 5.

The short proposal (maximum 3-4 double-spaced pages) is comprised of ***short responses to each the following bullets:***

- Background
- Objective(s)/Purpose/Intentions
- Methods or Techniques
- Deliverables/Outputs – outputs are the actual products of your work (meetings, reports, presentation to organizations, etc.)
- Expected Outcomes – outcomes are the anticipated or hoped for effects of your work.
- How Demonstrate KSAs?
- How Demonstrate the MPA Mission?
- How will the work contribute to positive change?
- Proposed project timeline.

The Contract (see attached):

The contract must be completed by the individual/team and signed by representatives of any participating organizations and the sponsoring faculty. This is **due at our first class in the Spring term (Thursday, April 5).**

MPA CAPSTONE PROJECT CONTRACT

Names and Email addresses of Student Participants

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Participating Organizations or Individuals (names and contact information)

Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact information: _____

Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact information: _____

Short Description of Project (attach proposal and HSR clearances, if applicable)

Description of Project “Deliverables”

Project timeline (attached)

We, the undersigned, in good faith, enter into an agreement to collaborate on this Capstone project. The students involved agree to meet regularly with the faculty member as indicated on the syllabus, and to also to keep participating organizations informed of their progress. Conflicts or problems will be immediately addressed and any misunderstandings about work or deliverables will be resolved by the student team, in consultation with the sponsoring faculty member and the participating organizations.

Student team member(s)

Student team member(s)

Sponsoring Faculty Member

Participating organization member

Participating organization member

cc: student(s), faculty sponsor and participating organization(s)