

***November 17, 2014***

TO: MPA Faculty and Staff

From: MPA Structure Workgroup (Larry Geri, Randee Gibbons, Michael Lane, Puanani Nihoa)

RE: Recommendations on the future staffing structure of the MPA Program

Over the past several weeks, our workgroup has met on three occasions and held candid and wide ranging conversations on the state of the MPA program. Our goal was to craft organizational options for consideration of the MPA team that would improve the performance of the program. In our discussions, we discussed our vision for the program, the challenges of the Director position and how to ease them, and the factors that brought about the high rates of turnover of the individuals in the tribal assistant director position. We also discussed the curricular and administrative support needs of the tribal concentration over the next five years or so. A key assumption is that given current budget constraints we are unlikely to receive additional resources to assist with this reorganization. This memo is not intended to provide a full-fledged structural proposal for the program, but note that the last section includes a listing of current faculty and staff resources.

Our vision is of an academic program that consistently provides a high quality educational experience to our students, while providing a sustainable and more enjoyable working environment for the Director and program staff. To achieve this vision, we will need to improve the consistency and quality of the tribal concentration curriculum and revise the Director and “Admin and Policy” Assistant Director (AD) positions. We also need to think carefully about 1) how to structure the Tribal AD position to provide our tribal students and faculty with the support they need, while avoiding the high-turnover of the past, and 2) how to ensure that the program has the internal capacity to maintain its marketing materials, including the program website and social media. At present we have a half-time Program Assistant and temporary 60% time Assistant AD Tribal Concentration (a position that ends in January). Because of our budget constraint one or the other of these positions, but not both, could be made a full-time position.

**Recommendations**

1. **Reduce the Director’s teaching load from 12 to 8 credits per year.** The Director would be expected to teach first year core each fall term, and one two-credit elective during winter quarter.

This would shift the Director position from 60/40 (administration/teaching) to roughly 75/25. There would be a slight increase in cost since (absent additional full-time faculty or faculty rotations into the program) we would need to hire an adjunct for one additional quarter. Although we believe that the program deserves a full-time Director with faculty status, that’s unlikely to occur anytime soon. This would significantly reduce the teaching responsibilities of the position and provide additional time and energy for the Director to focus on the many facets of program administration.

2. **Create a faculty-level Coordinator position for the Tribal Governance concentration with a 20-25% administrative load.** The long-term viability of this concentration will require considerable investment in building and maintaining relationships with the region’s tribal nations, as well as outreach efforts to tribes and potential students in nearby states (Montana, Idaho, Oregon). The founders of this concentration did this work in addition to their teaching and administrative duties, and now it is not clearly anyone’s responsibility. In addition to such outreach, the Coordinator would work with the Director on the development of the tribal curriculum.

**3. Reduce the workload of the “Administration and Policy” Assistant Director.** At present the position is not sustainable. An additional full-time administrative staff member for MPA is needed to provide office coverage and create a healthier workplace. The incumbent would work with the Director and staff under whatever configuration we decide on to offload some specific tasks and responsibilities, starting with increased support for the financial aid process and planning and organization of specific events, such as orientation and graduation.

**Options**

**A. Create a full-time MPA Program Coordinator position and part-time (ideally 75%) Assistant Director for the Tribal Concentration.** In addition to providing office coverage, the individual in the Program Coordinator position would be responsible for maintenance of our marketing program, website, and social media efforts, as well as taking primary responsibility for planning and delivery of some program events, including orientation and graduation. They would also assist faculty with special events such as symposia, which we unable to organize due to a lack of staff support.

The Assistant Director for the Tribal Concentration would assist the Tribal Governance Coordinator with recruiting for the concentration and outreach, provide first line support to students, aim to improve student retention, and assist with the financial aid process.

**B. Return to a full-time Assistant Director for the Tribal Concentration, and maintain the current 0.5 FTE Program Assistant position.** In this configuration, the responsibilities of the person in this position would reflect those listed in the position description for the position dated October, 2010, though with a greater emphasis on a program to improve student retention. They would also need to have the appropriate skills and experience to perform the marketing, website and social media functions listed above under the proposed Program Coordinator position. It is important to note that this position would not provide direct curricular support to faculty teaching in the tribal concentration as has occurred in the past.

**Current Master of Public Administration Program Staff Resources**

* MPA Director (currently 60/40 admin/teaching faculty position)
* Assistant Director, Public and Nonprofit Administration Concentration (full-time)
* Assistant Director, Tribal Governance Concentration (currently temporary, 0.6 FTE)
* Program Assistant (0.5 FTE)
* Writing Assistant (part-time, shared with MES)
* Teaching Assistant, Tribal Governance (part-time)
* Graduate Admissions Specialist (0.5 FTE; ¼ to 1/3 of the person’s time on MPA admissions)
* MPA Regular Faculty (now 4 FTE lines, plus 0.4 for the Director)
* Adjunct faculty
* Program Secretaries