**2019 PNAPP Capstone Exit Focus Groups**

**What impact has the MPA program had or will have on your career and why?**

* The ability to think critically, look at things through multiple perspectives, and a context for what public administration is and how to do it.
* Provided me with perspectives to be mindful while I work- in my various capacities.
* In a role helping structure a program in a way I would not have been doing two years ago.
* Allow me to advance my career potential.
* Coming into new state job I feel like I am able to catch up a lot more quickly because of what I have learned in the program. I also feel like its has given me a broader perspective of what state work really is.
* One thing I like to think about is…getting an MPA at TESC is really helpful in that I have no interest in perpetuating the mold of what a public administrator typically is. I am not perpetuating that mold- I am interested in navigating barriers with my toolkit…I can break the mold and the MPA is helping me do that tactfully.
* I knew I had to get an MPA to do the career I wanted to do. It has helped me feel a lot better about finding a job and knowing that I have the skills to do the job. I feel good about getting started in the actual workforce.
* Allows me to have allied knowledge in addition to skills. I have learned many topics, perspectives, and skills—which I would not have without the MPA program.
* Provided me perspectives to consistently be mindful of as I work in my various capacities
* Logic model and program evaluation, working ad-hoc in a role where I am helping to establish program. Would not have this opportunity a year or so ago.
* Advancement of career potential. HR directors have MPA and other certificates. Agencies recognize dedication students have in the MPA program.
* Gave me insight to state service allowing me to transition into a state position smoother. The program gave me a different perspective of state service, specifically dedication to service.
* MPA at ESC program does not perpetuate that mold of an administrator. Learning came from peers, class, etc…… Building a broad toolkit. Big picture focus not compartmentalized.
* Straight from undergraduate to graduate because wasn’t prepared for work force. It’s provided me with the skills to prepare for opportunities.
* Interactions with other people
* Reflection of personal growth
* Better understanding of outside influences on leadership
* Going into local governance
* Need MPA for career progression
* More critical decisions being made
* Show of genuine interest
* Needed to change myself and my attitudes as a way to improve environment: leadership
* Incorporating learnings in current work
* Versatility in a variety of careers
* Amy Gould: “MPA is like an MBA with a heart”
* Came for nonprofit, fell in love with local government
* Serving a very diverse population; wanted to know how to serve people when you don’t understand their experiences. Built a better understanding of others’ experiences.
* Connection to other jobs/opportunities
* Relationships/connections
* What we want more of:
	+ Informed conversation about self-care
	+ More time to connect with colleagues
	+ Making time more meaningful (use breaks to connect)
	+ Want to talk more about current events as a large group
	+ Wish I knew more about college resources available
	+ Start learning things in year one to integrate more into year two

**Electives? (Highlights of general comments, specific electives mentioned not listed here)**

-General consensus amongst the focus group that all electives were meaningful and impactful.

* Would have been nicer to have the tribal governance piece developed through core more.
* Electives had a component of real-world experiences.
* Foundations of public policy
* Project Management Elective- how to approach work, which was beneficial to work in core 2nd year. How to manage work and share work with others. Practical experience.
* Path to Sovereignty raised my awareness of the disparities amongst tribal nations due to resources
* Food Sovereignty and how colonization impacted native women and breast-feeding confidence. Children taken to boarding schools
* Electives that had real world components that I could put on my resume.
	+ Infrastructures for the 21st Century and Marketing for Public Service led to internship
	+ GIS certifications
* Electives with specific concentration (immigration law, labor law, climate solutions)
* Project management provided a structure that can keep you grounded throughout the project.
* Practical experience, deliverables and resume building.
* Practical applications/clear guidelines/skills to use/real world issues/”no BS” instructors

**Compare and contrast Core and electives?**

* Loved electives and being able to choose them. Faculty was influential on what I chose. Three days was very impactful
* Sometimes we come to core just to come, electives professors show up with intentionality
* Core was theoretical and electives were more concrete skills
* Enjoyed electives, more motivated to learn, was able to see how it applied to me specifically
* More time, more electives. Electives rich and valuable.
* Practicality of the electives. Project management allowed me to work with an outside agency which makes you want to produce quality work. Electives were practicality.
* Negotiation through a feminist lens instrumental in me developing the skills necessary to do my current position
* Like that we get to take MES electives. Need to promote this opportunity more amongst MPA
* Electives taught practical skills, while core taught theory (1st year core in particular). Electives allowed for the personalization of the program.
* Loved the electives that I took. Appreciated that I got to choose them and part of my decisions were based on who was teaching. It was powerful that in just 2-3 days I was able to take away as much as I did from the electives. I wonder if because we have less time it is more impactful because it is so concentrated?
* Sometimes we come to core just to come…whereas weekend classes student and professors show up with real intentionality
* I loved the specifics and real-world skills I walked away from in the electives. In core it was so theoretical and did not teach the concrete skills I was looking for.
* Liked how we are able to go in our own direction by choosing a different course of electives. Was able to see more clearly how electives translated to my career (vs. core).
* I really valued core. I couldn’t do more than core because of my demanding job. I loved electives and I find I want more because they are rich and they are valuable.
* I liked practicality of the electives. In core we did not have that practicality. We did not get a tie to how we will use this in our jobs.
* Things I learned in electives are directly tied to the job I currently have.
* So much theory in core.
* Love that we get to take MES electives.
* Enjoyed class team environment in Core. Different connections in electives.
* Diversity of opinion in Core is better. Great benefit of Core is cohort
* Better scheduling of electives…quarters seemed stacked
* Learn a lot in a short period of time in electives; contrast Core spend a lot of time learning a little bit. Core could be less time or use time more efficiently.
* Elective instructors specialized skills – not so for Core
* Core not deep enough: “we should live it til we stink”
* Nonprofit poorly represented in Core
* Teamwork in core: a plus!
* More diverse opinions in Core
* Electives more time efficient
* Less knowledge density in Core
* Breadth v Depth (people aren’t so sure about need for breadth)