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| Spring 2019 MPA Program Student Survey |
| The Evergreen State College |
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7/30/2019

**Spring 2019 MPA Program Student Survey**

**July 2019**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to assess the opinions and perspectives of currently enrolled MPA students regarding the program’s quality of instruction, perceived learning, student satisfaction, and other issues. The results from this survey will be used to make better decisions concerning the MPA program and to better serve the needs of its students.

**Methodology**

The target population was students enrolled in any MPA class across all three cohorts during the spring 2019 quarter, a total of 101 students. MPA program staff generated a site via Evergreen’s Drupal account with the survey instrument. An email invitation with a secure link to the survey assuring only one response per email was sent to all enrolled MPA students. The survey was open between May 28th and June 21, 2019. A total of 34 responses were completed for an overall response rate of 34 percent.

**Data Analysis**

This report provides the frequency histograms for responses to each closed-ended item on the survey. In addition, it includes respondent comments from open-ended items on the survey.

1. **General Questions**

**II. Meeting Our Mission**

**III. Program Performance**

**11) In your opinion, what three (3) electives offered by the MPA program are most important to your learning goals?**

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| Mental Karate for Leaders Developing Mediation Skills Public Law |
| GIS, Immigration Focus (All the Bricks in the Wall), Public Health Policy |
| Foundations of Public Policy  Project Management  Public Healthcare Policy |
| Neogtiation Through a Feminist Lens; Social Welfare Policy; and Skilled Agents of Change |
| Dismantling Racism in the Public Sector Equity and Public Administration Project Management |
| Public Health Policy Project Management Science Policy to Action |
| Sustainable Infrastructure  International Non Governmental Organizations  Leadership Mental Karate |
| Local governance GIS Veterans policy |
| Grants Writing, Path to Soveriegnty, Intergovernmental Relations |
| Public Health. |
| Foundations of Public Policy, ARM, Being a Leader Others Want to Follow |
| Veterans Policy Marketing for the Public Sector |
| Strategic Planning Larry Sequist Legislative session with Karen Fraser Grant writing |
| ARM legislative policy labor relations |
| Organizational Leadership Mediation Indigenous Research |
| Foundation of Public Policy |
| FAME, Public Law, Foundations of Public Policy |
| Organizational behavior |
| Public Law Local Governance Lean in the Public Sector |
| public speaking statistical analysis emotional intelligence |
| So far, the electives I have taken are going to be useful. I took Public Law and Public Finance and I believe the latter in particular will be very helpful. |
| Internship |
| Dismantling Racism in the Public Sector To Run a Nonprofit  Skills for Agents of Change |
| I have only enrolled in one MPA elective so far, NonProfit Fudning & Development with M. Elaine Vradenburgh.   The two MES Electives I enrolled in this year were challenging, engaging, and inspirational. For much of this year, I found the MPA electives to not be very compelling to my learning goals. However, I am excited to take Feminist Approaches to Measurement & Evaluation in the fall. |
| Public Policy Public Health Policy and Law Managing Organizations |
| Foundations of Public Policy Advanced Research Methods How to be a Leader Others Want to Follow |
| Foundations in Public Policy Public Finance Feminist Approaches to Measurement and Evaluation (or anything to do with stats and data) |
| Budgeting, human resources, project management |
| Health Policy Project Management Organizational Management |

**12i) Comments on instruction?**

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| Too much reading assigned |
| Second year faculty was significantly better than first year faculty. |
| I found that I learned the most from practitioners and people currently doing work in the field. That's not to say that I didn't learn anything from research-based faculty, just that it was my preference. |
| Instructors could be much more specific and intentional when evaluating coursework and assignments. Some instructors excel in constructive feedback and evaluation, others clearly copy and past feedback or select one small element to individualize. What I needed more of was instruction on how well something was done, where I fall on the spectrum of learning, what I should learn more of, how I can do better. I felt like I was blindly moving through the program, guessing I was doing well because I wasn't being told otherwise. |
| This is hard because you are asking about core, and first year was very dissatisfying on all levels. Second year was much better, being somewhat satisfied and very satisfied on most questions. The overall average is low, but cloaks the very good job done by second year faculty this year. |
| they each have their strengths and weaknesses. No faculty is perfect. |
| With Financial Aid, I had to make sure a culturally competent employee manages my account to avoid being scolded about spending my financial aid. |
| The 2017-2018 Core experience (with the exception of Amy Leneker) was atrocious. I am envious of former cohorts who had brilliant professors like Amy Leneker, Amy Gould, and Marc Baldwin |
| The instruction seems to be thrown together and not mindfully planned. Assignment instructions often do not fit either the readings or the lectures. Instructors are defensive when this lack of attention to detail is highlighted by students. |
| Always learn something. |
| Enjoyed varying methods of instruction. |
| I was having a good year until Spring quarter. Members of my faculty were visibly burned out. Feedback became more irregular, the messaging grew more negative, faculty were visibly impaired during one class. The dynamic shifted. |
| I am unclear if you want comments on faculty instruction or instruction of financial aid application. If it is about financial aid, I have no comments, as I did not use this.   Faculty instruction has been so inconsistent that this is hard to comment on. All of my elective faculty (all have been adjuncts) have been outstanding, organized, thoughtful, and responsive. Lianna and Marty as adjuncts in core were also great and consistent.   Core faculty has been a different story. Eric Trevan has been the most disappointing faculty I have ever encountered. He was not a subject matter expert in anything he presented, or if he was, he does not understand how to translate his knowledge into an educational environment. He did not provide feedback, he was flippant, he was on his phone in class constantly, and sometimes taught the class once in a quarter.   But on the other end of the spectrum is Lucky and Cheryl, who are organized and thoughtful in their approaches, knowledgeable in their areas, and provide thorough and helpful feedback to students.   Cali just falls in the middle of this. It is obvious in the classroom that she has control issues with both her faculty team mates and the student groups she works with, and also spends entirely too much time talking about herself and showing students her website. Her communications with students at times seemed entirely unprofessional.   Final note: I marked question 12c as neutral because I was unclear what the question was asking of me. |
| I really needed more feedback on my assignments in Winter and Spring quarter. That is my main complaint about the MPA program in general. I also think more background on topics like communication plans on budgets before we did projects on these things would have been helpful. |
| I don't feel got much out of the lengthy info dump lectures. There was a ton of information and it was gone through very quickly. Not much time to absorb information or really take adequate notes. I got minimal feedback/ correction on my papers. I don't feel like I should have to schedule a whole separate meeting to get feedback on my papers in a college class, especially not in a Grad program. Between class, homework and working full time, asking students to schedule separate meetings to get feedback is kind of ridiculous. |
| Would prefer to limit seminar time to on hour and develop a "lab" component to first-year CORE focused on workshops and real world applications. Nonprofit management was essentially absent from all of first-year CORE with exception to three lectures with similar content. |
| I feel like we have never received any tangible instructions on how to approach our assignments. I feel responsible for teaching myself how to do the assignments. The prompts are very broad, unclear, and sometimes confusing. There has been occasions when faculty became noticeably agitated when students continued to ask questions about an assignment that confused them. For the first two quarters I received no feedback on my assignments whatsoever, other than "good job!". This is not helpful. Overtime, it has impacted the quality of my work. Also, the class is really, really easy to get by. It is not academically challenging, or inspiring. There is seemingly a very low standard to be met for the work, and the assignment designs are simply elementary. I have had many undergraduate courses that were far more challenging than this program. I do not feel that I have learned any new analytical technique from the entire first year Core (though I have from my electives), and I can only think of a couple of lectures that were helpful. Oftentimes, I don't feel like I am in a graduate program at all, but perhaps my impression of graduate school was incorrect. I assumed it would be harder than Undergrad.   I like to commit myself fully to my schoolwork and take pride in what I produce, but it can not be all on me. I need a faculty member to push me, to teach me, to inspire me to go beyond my self-imposed limits. I have not felt challenged in this manner. It is crazy to me that we have not been taught how to perform any of our assignments, we are just expected to Google 'cost-benefit' analysis and do our best. This doesn't make sense, to me. If I am expected to teach myself how to do the assignments, than why am I here?   It is sad. I should be feeling happy after wrapping up my first year of grad school, but I feel sad, like I made a terrible mistake in not choosing the MES program. I have spoken with students from that program and studied alongside them in electives, and it is evident that they are receiving a higher quality education than we are. |
| The '18-'19 core faculty are not good teachers, professors, or mentors. It is hard to answer how satisfied I am in general questions that are not specific to core or electives because they have been such poor teachers. Electives I've taken with the second year team have been much better. Instruction should be more academic for all faculty. Students should be held to higher standards.  First-year core faculty are not capable of responding to feedback or concerns, leading seminar, or lecturing well. In electives, I have never had seminar, even when there is time for it, and feedback has generally been taken well. For electives, lectures and reading have been great. Core faculty need to learn how to plan as a team, it is not a divide and conquer task as they have treated it. Only showing up the weeks they are lecturing and filling time with pointless workshops. |
| The instructors need to model the behavior they presume to teach. There is a big gap between what students should be and what is taught or allowed to persist in the classroom. |
| First year core was sub-par for a number of reasons, including a lack of feedback and clear expectations, and a disappointing absence of follow up when issues were repeatedly raised with college leadership. Second year core was what I was expecting when I came to the program - responsive and timely feedback that helped me improve, challenging content and well-structured instruction, and clear expectations for assignments and general performance. I can tell the difference, at this point in my education, between a strong teaching performance and a lack of interest/attention/thoughtfulness in helping students learn. Second year I felt like I got what I came for. |
| Do better. |
| Work could have benefited from additional team work, workshops with time to complete in class and connection or ties and the end of lectures to the stream of learning. It is nice to be open and let students make connections but there is a lack of guidance, experience and wisdom that is often missing from core. I expected more engaging conversation on matters, seminars get to it at times, but elements are missing. What is the common bar or goal of the program that is the minimum the cohort should attain? Feels completely subjective currently. |

**17) Do you have any further comments about the MPA program at The Evergreen State College?**

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| Coffee should be served in every class |
| The first year program/core needs a lot of re-work. |
| I'm not sure I'd recommend the MPA program to others right now. I've felt really disappointed by the program and have felt that I have not gotten the same quality of education as my coworkers got in the past five or so years. The electives that I've taken have been fabulous, but I've found core to be lacking. Second year core was much better than first year, but I wish we had done more of a deeper dive on things we learned first year. |
| The program as been great and there is a lot of opportunity for improvement.  Providing more opportunity for collaboration and cross-cohort-alumni-instructor engagement, socialization, and opportunity to build connections and have conversations is what was lacking most from my experience. |
| First year last year was a mess, you all know it. No one did anything to make it better for us. Instead, we experienced academic gaslighting. I'm not sure that this survey will be used to improve the program or as a way to categorize dissent as "whining". When you have a room full of professionals say there is a big problem, maybe don't ignore that. First year was the most discouraging educational experience of my life. Second year was much, much better. Electives are great. I'm not sure why first year core was required. I'd much rather have spent those 18 credits learning things with electives. |
| I can not recommend those who know about the Advancement of Native Americans through wholesome experiences in other Tribal areas to attend this program, as that influence is seriously lacking. |
| Please use feedback to implement process improvements. Please seek to find why electives are so successful -take those lessons learned to improve Core. |
| All readings, lectures and assignments need to be piloted and validated before being included in a syllabus. Many readings were never discussed in assignments or seminars. Time management was an issue during workshops and seminar. |
| I'm loving every minute of it. It's been amazing. |
| Excellent learning. |
| It's funny that I feel discouraged about the program. My cohort is wonderful. There are powerful faculty, but I wonder at the central part of core - the shared teaching burden, the structure of our assignments and faculty lecture. It seems like we could have a more standardized curriculum and regular schedule of events, more social opportunities and guest lectures. I would love to have reading questions for our assignments and ideas on how it connects to our theme. It would be AWESOME if we divided into our concentrations at least once a quarter for direct content, and if the entire program gathered quarterly for a guest speaker, an activity, or a presentation. Saturday's were truly special - I loved meeting my classmates and learning about them. |
| Make core classes 8 credits, meeting 2 times a week. |
| I want this program to succeed and I want to recommend students to it, but there has to be a turnaround with the faculty. There are great faculty (Anguelov, Gould, King, and many many adjuncts) but they are overpowered by the bad experiences with others (Trevan, Beard). It is an unfortunate situation. |
| The MPA Director is the reason I have elected to stick with the MPA program! Her support and guidance has been inspiring. Please pass on my appreciation to MPA Director, Doreen. I have profound respect for the amazing MPA faculty. Each have their own personal strengths but all embrace the desire to support our pursuit of an education. |
| No, I addressed them earlier. I just need more feedback especially since I know my writing needs work. |
| The program has a lot of potential and I believe the teaching model can work. There needs to be better organization among the faculty (such as not scheduling Saturday class that coincides with weekend electives). It would be great to have more opportunities to connect with the students in my specific concentration and better understand course work (via electives) that could support my learning outcomes. |
| Something has to change. I brought my frustrations to faculty members on a couple of occasions. While I felt heard, it did not produce any tangible results. This quarter my seminar teacher admitted that there are faults in the curriculum design and referred to our cohort as 'guinea pigs'. The thing is, guinea pigs do not pay to be guinea pigs. I am going to be in debt for the rest of my life from this program, and I don't even feel like I am getting a decent education. If money were not an issue, I would not continue with the program, but at this point I have invested so much that I do not have any other option. I was expecting a much higher level of instruction from this program. I really hope that year 2 is better. I really, really, hope that it is. |
| It should be great. The structure for something great is there. However, throwing together teachers that can't handle core is really sucky and I feel like my time was wasted and I want my money back. I am very angry with whoever made this choice and DIDN'T see a problem when observing them. Faculty should be taught how to seek feedback and implement it.  A survey of the curriculum: books, lectures, workshops, seminars, assignments with a easy/moderate/hard and not useful/somewhat useful/very useful would be a good place to start. |
| I hope this program is remodelled to appreciate the students and listen to their concerns. There have been stunning lacks of leadership in this program. Disinterested and disconnected was the usual for the majority of core faculty and the director. |
| Do better. |
| the program should vary elective class schedules, between weekends and weeknights, so more students get a chance to take them; classes scheduled the same way year after yeah may be convenient for instructors, but they fail to serve students with all different schedule needs |
| In its current state, the program is unclear what it is providing the students in it. Words like "critical thinking" and "safe space" are used with little connection to actual meaning. I learn to question everything, but not how to tie it back together. It feels like thinking processes are taken apart but not put back together or even how to put it back together. I want to break cycles, but what does that look like? These questions should be addressed in at least a conversational aspect. |

**IV. Demographics**