



July 2010

DRAFT - Master of Science in Public Policy and Management University of Washington

Introduction

The University of Washington (UW) seeks approval to offer a Master of Science in Public Policy and Management as part of its Ph.D. in Public Policy and Management program. The degree would be available only to students enrolled in the doctoral program. Beginning in Fall 2010, all doctoral students who complete two years of coursework, a Qualifying Examination, and a Major Area Paper would receive the proposed degree.

The degree is intended to prepare students to advance the state of research, practice, and education in public policy, as well as develop creative, research-based policy responses to social and environmental challenges throughout the world. Graduates would be expected to be proficient in research methods, identifying and mastering problem fields, and sophisticated levels of analysis. The degree would complement UW's existing Master of Public Administration by qualifying graduates for higher-level research and analysis of public policy and management issues.

The Ph.D. program, approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) in 2006, is housed in the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs. Of the 18 FTE students served by the program, about four annually are expected to earn the new degree, program planners estimate. At least three of them are expected to continue with their Ph.D. program while one may elect to pursue employment.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington

By formally recognizing the academic achievement of students who complete the first two years of the Ph.D. program coursework and other necessary requirements, the M.S. would support the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* policy goal of increasing the number of degrees produced in Washington to levels comparable in other Global Challenge States.

Diversity

During Winter and Spring 2009, the Evans School created a comprehensive Diversity Strategic Plan. The proportion of minority students entering the Ph.D. program reached 50 percent in 2007-08 and 2008-09, indicating that this and previous efforts have paid off.

Program Need

The state employer needs assessment¹ indicates a gap between projected job openings and current supply of graduates for research, science, and technical occupations. The proposed M.S. degree would provide additional credentialed researchers capable of doing advanced analytical work in public policy professions.

The types of agencies likely to hire students with this degree include the World Health Organization or the National Institutes of Health. The proposed degree also would help expand the pool of students who apply for the Ph.D. program. Some students might be more likely to apply for the Ph.D. program if they know they can complete the M.S. as a fallback if their doctoral program doesn't work out.

The proposed degree would not duplicate existing state or regional programs. Portland State University offers a Ph.D. in Public Policy, but does not offer a master's degree. The UW offers a Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.), but this degree places less emphasis on broad, issues-based research, analysis and reporting than the proposed degree would. Graduates of the M.S. program would be expected to be proficient in research methods, identifying and mastering problem fields, and sophisticated levels of analysis.

Program Description

As noted, the proposed M.S. degree would be based on the same curriculum taught in the first two years of the Ph.D. program—coursework intended to prepare students to advance the state of research, practice, and education and develop creative research-based policy responses to social and environmental challenges throughout the world.

The core curriculum consists of two streams of coursework:

1. Theory and literature central to the field of Public Policy and Management research, exploring public management, institutional theory, public policy processes, analysis, and evaluation.
2. Research design and the application of research methods to public policy and management, covering microeconomics for policy analysis, research design, quantitative and qualitative analytic methods, and written and oral communication and research findings.

In addition, students are required to complete coursework in a related discipline, such as economics, political science, or sociology. This helps them develop disciplinary perspective about the substantive issues behind policy problems. Students also are required to develop a field concentration in a policy field such as education, the environment, urban affairs, nonprofit management, international development, or poverty alleviation.

The proposed degree would not require any new courses or new faculty. Courses would be taught by regular faculty in the Evans School. The Evans faculty is composed of 31 individuals (26 FTE) in tenured/tenure-track positions and three research faculty. Seven faculty (2 FTE) serve the Ph.D.

¹ The employer needs assessment, *A Skilled and Educated Workforce: An assessment of the number and type of higher education and training credentials required to meet employer demand* (2009), was prepared jointly by the HECB, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

program, which the Dean of the Evans School oversees. A 0.2 FTE faculty coordinator handles academic management, student records, assessment, and planning. The faculty coordinator also oversees a half-time professional staff person who supports the Ph.D. program.

Student progress towards learning outcomes would be assessed within individual courses and through the Qualifying Examination and Major Area Paper. The M.S. coursework would normally take two years, with the Qualifying Examination administered at the end of year one and the Major Area Paper completed by the end of the summer of year two.

The Qualifying Examination requires students to synthesize and apply ideas and tools from across the core coursework. Students must pass all sections of the exam before continuing to the second year of the program. The 30-page Major Area Paper is reviewed by a faculty committee, followed by a two-hour oral examination. All students who complete the first two years of coursework, the Qualifying Examination, and the Major Area Paper would be awarded the M.S., regardless of whether they continue on to earn their Ph.D.

The program's effectiveness would be established by reviewing student outcome data: exams, exit interview responses, program completion rates, and placement rates compared to institutions with similar programs. Students who leave the program without completing would be interviewed to determine why they did not complete.

Program Costs

The cost of adding the M.S. to the Ph.D. program would be negligible.

External Review

Two reviewers evaluated the proposal: Dr. Charles Clotfelter, Z. Smith Reynolds Professor of Public Policy, Professor of Economics and Law, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University; and Dr. Ross Rubenstein, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research, Maxwell School, Syracuse University.

Both reviewers recommended approval and neither made any recommendations for improvement. Both noted that other institutions often confer a master's degree as part of a Ph.D. program. Both pointed out various program strengths.

For example: Dr. Clotfelter called the mix, sequence, and integration of courses strong. He saw two compelling reasons for the degree. First, adding the M.S. would make the program more attractive to potential students because an applicant would earn a meaningful degree even if the Ph.D. did not work out, which is important because doctoral work is an uncertain prospect even for the brightest applicants. Second, the M.S. would allow the Evans School to apply high standards for continuing doctoral students by making a discontinuation decision easier for the Evans School to make and easier for the discontinued student to accept. He did not see any weaknesses in the program, calling it “. . . one of those very happy cost-benefit calculations that should allow everyone to have a rather easy time in coming to a decision.”

According to Dr. Rubenstein, “The proposed degree program is very strong in terms of the quality of its faculty, its intellectual rigor and breadth of the coursework, and the assessment of student learning.” He noted the Evans School “. . . boasts an impressive group of well-known research-active faculty.” He called the course selection and sequencing logical and coherent. Although he made no recommendation for improvement, he saw a potential weakness in that having a marketable M.S. available might weaken the incentive for students to complete the Ph.D. However, he thought this unlikely to occur.

Staff Analysis

The M.S. would support the University of Washington’s mission and the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*. It would also align the Public Policy and Management program with current UW Graduate School expectations for doctoral programs. Its students would benefit from the Evans School’s diversity efforts.

The M.S. would respond to student, employer, and community need without duplicating existing programs. Students would receive a credential acknowledging their academic achievement and employers would gain access to graduates capable of doing high-level research work. Having highly qualified M.S. graduates available to fill public policy research jobs would benefit the community. UW would benefit as well because the M.S. would make the Ph.D. program attractive to a larger pool of students.

Students would be taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty and would study a curriculum both external reviewers liked. Students would be assessed using multiple measures, including comprehensive assessments after the first and second years. Program assessment would employ multiple measures as well.

The faculty and curriculum of the Ph.D. program would not change with the addition of the M.S. Furthermore, any cost associated with the addition would be negligible. Finally, both reviewers recommended approval of the program as proposed.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the Master of Science in Public Policy and Management at the University of Washington. The HECB’s Education Committee discussed the proposal during its June 23, 2010 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 10-15

WHEREAS, The University of Washington proposes to offer a Master of Science in Public Policy and Management; and

WHEREAS, The degree would support University of Washington's mission and the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*; and

WHEREAS, The degree would bring the Public Policy and Management program into alignment with current UW Graduate School expectations for doctoral programs; and

WHEREAS, The degree would be awarded to students in the doctoral program and would not entail any changes to the program's admission requirements, curriculum, or faculty; and

WHEREAS, The degree would respond to student, employer, and community need without duplicating existing degrees; and

WHEREAS, The new degree would provide appropriate recognition for students' academic achievement;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Master of Science in Public Policy and Management at the University of Washington, effective July 15, 2010.

Adopted:

July 15, 2010

Attest:

Jesús Hernandez, Chair

Roberta Greene, Secretary