

Permanent Status Review of the Public Policy BA Program

Reviewers:

Dr. Douglas Archibald, Education

Dr. Beth Morling, Psychology

Reviewer comments are below in italics. We frame our review as responses to the permanent status review criteria on the faculty senate website.

Respectfully submitted March 14, 2014

Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

1. Does the major/program meet its originally stated goals and objectives?

The proposed curriculum originally listed 7 learning goals for the program. The self-study for permanent status review mentioned an internal assessment in 2010; the details of the assessment were not included, specifically, they do not specifically indicate whether or how they assessed these 7 learning outcomes. However, a curriculum map in the original proposal indicates how the courses in the major align with these seven goals. In addition, it is clear that the students are exposed to their goal #6 (learn to use a variety of research methods to examine policy issues) via the research opportunities in the major, and the major is especially strong in goal #7 (have real-world experiences across a range of policy-related roles). In addition, the faculty survey in the original proposal indicated that most faculty believed the program should prepare students for graduate work; clearly many of the graduates have gone on to be admitted to Masters' programs at UD and elsewhere.

2. Is the major/program compatible with the Academic Priorities of the University?

Yes; Appendix A shows a curriculum matrix which maps courses onto University General Education goals.

3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this major/program?

Strengths:

Close connection with local agencies in the State of Delaware, which provides a number of valuable internship experiences for majors.

Opportunities for undergraduate research. Summer Public Policy Fellowships support undergraduates who want to help faculty with their research (for example in the

Institute for Public Administration, Center for Community Research and Service, or the Disaster Research Center).

Other applied opportunities including the Legislative Fellows Program, Winter in Washington.

Clear path to career-enhancing graduate degrees school via three 4+1 programs.

Interdisciplinary nature, many students double major and all of them minor.

Self-study indicates that the program has adequate space and resources.

Weaknesses

None noted by these reviewers.

Impact and Demand

1. Describe any significant impact the proposed curricula might have on other instructional, research, or service programs of the University.

There appear to be positive impacts and no adverse impacts. Positive impacts described in the 2008 proposal for provisional approval of the Public Policy BA presumably continue. In the area of instruction and service, these include opportunities for students to learn through placements in a number of UD centers including

- *the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) Legislative Fellows Program;*
- *the Center for Community Research and Service to engage in research or service on public policy issues, such as housing, community development and poverty;*
- *the Delaware Education Research and Development Center (DERDC) for students interested in policy analysis and evaluation related in education;*
- *the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD) for research and service opportunities in historic preservation and planning.*

These centers have a long-standing relationship with policy-making bodies and community organizations that will provide additional resources for the students in a public policy major.

In addition the proposal describes the long-standing SPPA Legislative Fellows program where students gain experience with legislative work in Delaware, the

Winter session “study abroad” in Washington DC in which selected SPPA students participate, the Undergraduate Summer Public Policy Fellows, and the Undergraduate Research Assistant opportunities in which 14 students have participated to date.

2. Are the admissions requirements for this major/program clearly stated and fairly implemented?

There seem to be no specialized admissions requirements for the major.

3. Is there sufficient demand for this major/program to warrant granting it permanent status? Are enrollments strong?

There are currently 94 students in the major (31 in the minor); 24 graduated already and 32 for the coming academic year. The program is apparently growing in interest. The program identifies “rapid growth” in majors, minors, and class seats filled. In addition, the new Honor’s degree attracted 12 students in its first year, indicating that public policy program attracts excellent students. In addition, the document indicates that public policy programs are growing in the country, so this suggests that demand will increase in the future.

4. Do the students in the major/program receive appropriate advising and mentoring?

The program has a clearly described advising system. There is a handbook and a reasonable system of general and career-specific advising.

5. Does the major/program require additional student expenses beyond the traditional books and supplies, such that additional need for financial aid can be expected?

No additional expenses for students are required.

6. Does the program have the support of departmental and affiliated faculty?

Dean letter shows strong support.

7. Are resources available to support and maintain the program/major?

Given that the program has been operating successfully for over four years it is presumably financially sustainable. The proposal states, “No additional budgetary expenses are required.”

Evaluation

1. Does the major/program address any of the ten goals of General Education at the University (question for undergraduate programs only)?

Yes; evidence in Appendix A.

Emphasis on analytical thinking, analytical writing, communication, and ethics.

2. Has the major/program clearly delineated the knowledge, values, skills, and other learning outcomes that their graduates will be expected to have acquired?

The learning outcomes are not delineated in this self-study, but they were in the original proposal.

3. Has the major/program implemented a plan to evaluate and assess the learning outcomes of its students?

The department has already conducted an assessment (2010), and this plan resulted in some curricular revisions. These revisions offered more breadth of courses, reflecting faculty expertise, and more DLE options.

4. Please comment on completion and job placement of students who completed the program/major.

Five graduate majors have enrolled in the 4+1 program in public policy. Others have attended other policy-related graduate programs. At least three work in public service. The self-study does not indicate how graduate placement data were collected; however, we understand that it can be very difficult to collect accurate data on the placement of our graduates.

Additional Comments

Please add any observations or comments you may have about this major/program.

These reviewers conclude that the undergraduate BA degree in public policy is a valuable, sustainable undergraduate major and we strongly recommend awarding it permanent status.