

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Documents Reviewed: A proposal from SPEA to develop a New MPA Concentration in Urban Sustainability and CVs from faculty who would be involved in the program.

Summary: SPEA is proposing a new concentration in urban sustainability for its Master of Public Affairs Program. The degree would “provide students with the tools they will need to define and implement sustainable policies in an urban and regional context when employed in leadership positions in government, for-profit, and non-profit organizations.” The MPA at IUPUI is a professional degree that focuses on management, policy, quantitative skills and fiscal affairs.

The new concentration would require **48** credit hours to complete.

Students would complete seven core courses in the MPA program.

Five courses required of all MPA students:

Statistical Analysis for Effective Decision Making
Public Management Economics
Law and Public Affairs
Government and Leading in a Global Society
Capstone in Public and Environmental Affairs

Two of electives required of all MPA students

Public Management **or** Management in the Nonprofit Sector
Public Finance and Budgeting **or** Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations

The sustainability concentration would require six additional courses

Three required of all students

Urban Sustainability
Environmental Conflict Resolution
Environmental Law

Two skills courses from a group of four

Environmental Risk Analysis
Sustainability Assessment
Benefit-cost Analysis of Public and Environmental Policies
Application of Geographic Information Systems

One policy course selected from a group of five

Natural Resource Management and Policy
Policy Process
Energy, Policy and Sustainability
Environmental Policy Analysis
International Environmental Policy

A professionally relevant internship experience

Additional courses to bring the total to 48 credit hours

1. Are the goals clear and achievable?

The goal of the MPA program is “to prepare students for high level careers in government and nonprofit agencies and organizations” and to have students leave the program with a “strong preparation in management, policy, quantitative skills and fiscal affairs.”

The goal of the urban sustainability concentration “is to provide additional tools that will allow graduates to define and implement sustainable policies in regulatory agencies, environmental services businesses, and environmentally concerned nonprofits in addition to nonprofit and for-profit organizations regulated, served, and affected by these organizations.”

These goals do seem to be clear and achievable. The MPA program at IUPUI has a very good track record of placing its graduates in high-level governmental and nonprofit organizations. The school certainly has the curriculum and expertise to provide the training necessary to achieve these goals.

2. Is the program Academically Sound?

The urban sustainability concentration will be built on the MPA degree, which is accredited by National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. It is one of five accredited MPA programs in the state.

The titles of courses and outline of the program make logical sense.

The school has assembled a faculty well qualified to deliver academically sound instruction for the concentration. All have terminal degrees, and their backgrounds show an interesting mix of professional and academic experience and extensive research in the areas related to the concentration.

The admission requirements are similar to those for other graduate program on campus: a degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum grade

point average of “B,” a combined score of 1000 or higher on the old or 300 or higher on the new GRE, or a total score of 500 on the Graduate Management Admissions Test or a score of 150 or higher on the LSAT, in addition to references and work experience.

The School has a solid plan for assessment which includes tests to measure mastery of competencies, internship evaluations, percentages of students who get good jobs in their desired fields, and review of student evaluations. SPEA also provides examples of using the results to adjust curriculum, personnel, and practice.

The program has an advisory committee whose backgrounds represent environmentally and policy concerned organizations in government, non-profit, and for profit sections.

3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit?

The proposal lists 11 faculty members who will be involved with the program and says that school has the necessary faculty and staff in place to deliver the concentration. A number of the courses have already been taught as topics courses and the bulk of the credit hours come from the existing MPA program.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program.

SPEA predicts that most students who would be interested in the program would come from their current group of MPA students or new students specifically interested in the concentration. There are currently no other graduate programs in sustainability, public affairs, or policy analysis on the IUPUI campus so there should be little impact on other units here.

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regain this proposal...

I recommend that this program be approved. It is a specialization that builds on a proven MPA program; the urban focus matches the mission of both SPEA and the IUPI campus; the faculty has the expertise to deliver the content; and sustainability should be an increasingly important concern in all types of private and public sector organizations in the future.