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Questioning Success

An Alumni Assessment of the MPA Program for the Center For Public
Service at Seton Hall University

Submitted to the
Center For Public Service
Master of Public Administration Program
Seton Hall University

By

Kevin Michael Byrne

A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Public Administration

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Faculty Advisor

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Director

Abstract

This capstone project involved an alumni assessment of the Master of Public Administration Program offered by the Center For Public Service at Seton Hall University. Questionnaires were mailed to over 500 alumni and approximately 23.4% were returned. The responses from the alumni indicate that the MPA Program has met its mission and successfully prepared its students for their careers. Although not the focus of the literature review, the Center's MHA program is also assessed.

Introduction

The objective of this capstone project is to better understand how successfully the Master of Public Administration Program (MPA) offered by the Center For Public Service at Seton Hall University has met its mission and prepared its graduates for their careers. A questionnaire was mailed to all alumni to assess their perceptions of the MPA Program.

This topic is important for two major reasons. First, this capstone project will benefit the administration and faculty in understanding the needs of both current and future students. Second, this capstone project will assist the Center in understanding how well the MPA Program has met its mission. Understanding how well the Center For Public Service has met its mission will prove beneficial during the national accreditation process that will begin during the second half of this year.

In past years, the Center For Public Service has effectively performed the thorough task of assessing current and graduating students of the MPA Program. Although alumni surveys have also been done, they did not include custom designed questions related to the Center's mission, goals and objectives.

The benefits of assessing alumni have been well documented. Alumni surveys provide a basis for evaluating how well the knowledge and skills developed through the educational program relate to the knowledge and skills required in the workplace. (Delaney, Jennings, 1989). As practicing professionals, alumni may share the benefits of insights not yet developed by current students (Delaney, Park, 1994). Alumni potentially offer an objective perspective given their distance from involvement with the program (Delaney, Khali, 1990).

Feedback from this capstone project will provide useful insight to the administration and faculty who will guide the Center For Public Service in the upcoming years. The administration

and faculty of The Center For Public Service have a difficult task in determining which direction the MPA Program will be headed due to the debates that surround the identity of public administration education.

In 1967, John Honey stated "Those in the field are acutely aware of intellectual problems. Is public administration a field, a discipline, a science, a profession? Or is it the process of conducting public business, which requires the knowledge and skills of many disciplines and professors." More recently, Ventriss (1991) quoted Bill Kirchoff, the City Manager of Arlington, Texas stating the following, "What can today's MPA graduates do?.. Unless they have an undergraduate degree in engineering, accounting, business administration, architecture, or some other hard science, and possess the tough kernel of ambition, the answer is not too much." Each of the quotes is representative of the tough challenges faced by the administration and faculty of The Center For Public Service. The quotes are also representative of the conflicts within this field that must be acknowledged when analyzing data from the alumni assessment.

Using the data and the observations from this alumni assessment, the faculty and administration may gain additional insight into how the MPA Program can be improved in order to prepare current students for their careers in public service. Results from Delaney's graduate assessment study were utilized by both administrators and faculty in documenting program success in accreditation reports, in identifying priority needs for grant funded projects, and in identifying program strengths and areas in need of improvement for curricular evaluation and planning (Delaney, 1996).

The year 2001 is notable for the Center For Public Service for it is a year that includes national program re-accreditation. The accreditation process, performed by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), requires a self-study

program and a 2 – 3 day campus visit. Within the NASPAA self-study program requirement is a sub section titled, “Assessment,” which instructs the MPA Program to provide documentation on student performance and accomplishment of program mission. The outcome of this capstone project will help fulfill this NASPAA requirement for the data and observation collected in this alumni assessment will assist in determining whether or not the mission of the MPA Program has been accomplished.

Additionally, the alumni assessment can assist with other accreditation requirements. NASPAA requires the self-study program to include documentation on internships, faculty, library, offices, classrooms, meeting areas and other aspects of the MPA Program. This alumni assessment may be able to provide additional insight for these areas in the self-study program.

It is the goal of this capstone project to better understand how well the Center For Public Service has met its mission. In completing this capstone project, the additional benefits that have been described may be realized by the faculty and administrators of the MPA Program.

Review of Literature

This capstone project seeks to better understand how well the Center For Public Service has met its mission and prepared its students for their respective careers. It includes a review of literature that will encompass an understanding of three areas: work that pertains to the improvement of public administration graduate education, similar assessment studies that have been performed in the field of public administration and design of an alumni assessment. Overall, this review of literature will be exploratory in that it is an attempt to become familiar with recent issues in the field of public administration education.

It is important to review published work concerning the improvement of graduate education in the field of public administration because an acknowledgement of this work will assist in better understanding the results of the alumni assessment. Although a number of issues on public administration education will be presented, some may be missed. Any issue excluded was done so unintentionally.

The work published on the improvement in public administration education can be examined in two parts. The first part will examine recommended program approaches in public administration education while the second part will strictly focus on improvement of the program curriculum. Recommended program approaches in public administration will consist of the following topics: debate surrounding the overall approach to public administration, strength of the leadership theme in public administration programs, theory versus practice, merger of the MPA and CPM programs, weakness in the interdisciplinary setting approach, internationalization of public administration education, and rediscovery of the word "public." Improvement of the program curriculum will discuss curriculum gaps such as technology, ethics, nonprofit

management and public relations. The recommended program approaches will be discussed first.

As mentioned in the introduction, the field of public administration education is complex due to identity conflicts associated with it. It has become customary for social science disciplines to engage in periodic soul searching, but perhaps more than any other field of inquiry, public administration has done more than its fair share (Ventriss, 1991). While there are multiple interpretations of the meaning of a graduate education in public administration and significant argument as to those definitions of those interpretations, most can agree that one of the fundamental goals of the MPA is to prepare students for the administrative challenges of the future (King, Britton, Missik, 1996). NASPAA recognizes this disagreement within the field. In the NASPAA general instructions of accreditation found on their website, it is clearly stated that NASPAA standards and Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (COPRA) recognize that programs will have different missions and approaches to achieving excellence in public affairs education.

Although NASPAA recognizes that MPA programs will have different missions and approaches, it does set guidelines for the curriculum of accredited public administration programs. NASPAA's stance on common curriculum is as follows:

The common curriculum components shall enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively:

In the Management of Public Service Organizations, the components of which include: Human Resources; Budgeting and financial processes; Information, including computer literacy and applications.

In the Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis, the components of which include: Policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation; Decision-making and problem-solving.

With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, the components of which include: Political and legal institutions and processes; Economic and social institutions and processes; Organization and management concepts and behavior.

Also, listed below is NASPAA's official statement regarding the freedom that accredited programs have within the common curriculum.

These area requirements do not prescribe specific courses. Neither do they imply that equal time should be spent on each area or that courses must all be offered by the public affairs, public policy or public administration programs. Nor should they be interpreted in a manner that might impede the development of special strengths in each program.

As a result, Cleary stated in 1991 that his survey had produced no evidence of a standardized core curriculum in public administration programs. This does not reflect failure. Overall, masters programs in public administration are serving the needs of education for management in the public service reasonably well, but this is not good enough (Cleary, 1991). Cleary continues to state, "In all likelihood, people are being educated to be technically competent, but a big question exists as to whether educational programs are helping to develop, in Derek Bok's query, "the kinds of people" to which "we wish to entrust...official power over our lives?"

Cleary's assessment touches upon a frequently discussed topic. That is, who is it that public administration should strive to teach? Should the focus of public administration and, therefore, public administration education, be upon refining the tools and trade or upon developing solid governors (King, Britton, Missik, 1996)? In 1991, Ventriss stressed similar concerns. In short, as critical as it is to educate students to be competent public managers or policy analysts, it is equally important to educate students who may one day wish to be Secretary of State, a senator, or a community leader (Ventriss, 1991). The gap between King's and Ventriss' work is about five years. It is apparent that during that time, the desire for a strengthening of leadership skills continued to remain a concern.

In 1991, Ventriss offered suggestions to improve other areas of public administration education. First, Ventriss stressed the need for mutual learning between scholars and practitioners to help bridge the dichotomy of theory and practice. Mutual learning was suggested in response to criticism that collaborative research between a scholar and practitioner would run the dangerous risk of potentially contaminating the scholar's willingness to explore certain theoretical issues that the practitioner may find infeasible or even threatening (Ventriss, 1991). It was stated that mutual learning would jointly link scholars and practitioners in furthering their knowledge and maturity on public issues, and not a one-way relationship whereby the research agenda is dictated by the practitioner (Ventriss, 1991).

The MPA Program currently has a student community assistance project (SCAP) which may be considered to be along a similar line to that of mutual learning. SCAP can be considered to be a scholar / practitioner collaborative effort for it involves assisting with the outcome of an issue / project of a volunteering organization. The structure of SCAP requires the professor to guide a class through the steps of creating a workable solution to an organization's problem. Such an environment provides the students with a theory and practice problem and allows the professor room for theoretical exploration. Feedback of this project will be reviewed in the assessment.

Another recommendation to further bridge theory and practice is the merger of the MPA program and the Certified Public Manager program. Joint Certification could begin to bridge the gap between theory and practice within public administration (Hays, Duke, 1996). CPM candidates could serve as the MPA student's link to the real world (providing internship opportunities and contacts), while MPA students would contribute expertise and inexpensive (or free) labor in practically oriented research projects (Hays, Duke, 1996). The authors go on to

state further that the advantages to MPA programs of such a merger would include increased enrollment (since CPM enrollment is heavily subsidized by state governments), additional financial support, and further diversity. However, Hays and Duke do point out that a major impediment is the fact that CPM and MPA programs draw students from two different populations and many CPM candidates may not have the academic qualification required by the program. Although it is unclear as to whether or not any interest in the CPM program will be evident in the data analysis of this alumni assessment, it has been presented in order to gain a complete understanding of recommended improvements.

Another recommendation, provided by Ventriss, is that of interdisciplinary settings in MPA Programs. Although Ventriss encouraged interdisciplinary approaches, he warned of its pitfalls to public administration education. Public administration programs are slowly coming to resemble a disoriented educational octopus, with appendages moving in all directions, lacking a sense of normative coherency (Ventriss, 1991). The Center For Public Service MPA Program's mission statement currently includes the achievement of an interdisciplinary setting. This is also an area that may be evident in the results of the alumni assessment.

Lastly, Ventriss calls for the internationalizing of public administration education and the rediscovery of the true meaning of the word public. Worthwhile to note, the MPA Program at Seton Hall currently has a dual degree program with the School of Diplomacy and International Relations. With regard to the latter recommendation, Ventriss states that it is the view of the public that should guide the field's conception of administration and policy, not the other way around.

Each of the concerns listed above has focused on an overall learning approach to public administration. These approaches may be difficult to identify in the raw data of the alumni

assessment, but could be discernible in the written observations that alumni have offered for analysis. Recommended improvement in public administration program curriculum will be discussed next. This area should be easier to identify in the results of the alumni assessment since curriculum gaps are focused on specific courses and programs.

In 1990, Cleary surveyed accredited public administration programs and described curriculum gaps that alumni of the survey had identified. Cleary concluded that there was support for greater emphasis in the curriculum on computer skills / information systems, ethics and nonprofit management (Cleary, 1990). Cleary also stated that coverage seemed especially light in the environmental areas of social, economic, and legal setting. A need for additional computer skills is not surprising given the time period and the tremendous increase of computers in the workplace. It is assumed that programs of all types had experienced this problem in some shape or form in the early 1990s. However, ethics and nonprofit management, as of late, are still the subject of attention. No additional information was found on light coverage in the areas of social, economic and legal environment so it is unclear if this is still a curricular gap issue.

Menzel examined efforts made in recent years to introduce the "new" ethics into the curriculums of graduate studies programs in public affairs and administration in the United States (Menzel, 1997). The term "new" ethics used in the study, and defined by Derek Bok, does not seek to convey a set of moral truths but tries to encourage students to think carefully about complex moral issues (Menzel, 1997). Furthermore, he asserts, "the principal aim of the course is not to impart 'right answers' but to make students more perceptive in detecting ethical problems when they arise, better acquainted with the best moral thought that has accumulated through the ages, and more equipped to reason about the ethical issues they will face in their own personal and professional lives (Menzel, 1997).

The MPA Program currently has an objective in its mission statement dedicated solely to the promotion of ethics and / or ethical issues. Menzel concluded in his study that ethics in the public administration programs has increased but still needs continued support in the form of faculty, training and development.

Much has changed since Cleary stated that a gap had existed in the area nonprofit management. Since 1990 the number of university and college based graduate programs in nonprofit management in the United States has grown tremendously (Wish, Mirabella, 1998). As a result, an enduring debate has taken place among faculty teaching in professional degree programs on the best place to educate managers of nonprofit organizations (Wish, Mirabella, 2000). Wish and Mirabella found that the MBA, MPA, MSW and MNO environments provide a sizeable number of classes on the internal management of nonprofits. Internal management would include internal management skills, financial management and human resource management. Fewer courses are concerned with the nonprofit manager's outside function as entrepreneur, fundraiser, or community leader (Wish, Mirabella, 2000). By continuing to design our curricula with the emphasis on internal management, we are not providing future managers with the tools they need to continue the voluntary sector's historical commitment to advocacy and organizing to meet community needs (Wish, Mirabella, 2000). This alumni assessment will provide feedback that may increase awareness of nonprofit management at Seton Hall.

Lastly, there were calls for greater attention toward public relations. The administrative leaders of the future would benefit greatly from the ability to use public relations to manage their programs and enhance the viability of their organizations (Mordecai, 1998). Four aspects of Public Relations' importance to public administration were described by Mordecai: learning about the public desires and aspirations, advising the public about what it should desire, ensuring

satisfactory contact between public and government officials and informing the public about what an agency is doing. Currently, the MPA Program has not specifically identified Public Relations in the mission statement.

A knowledge of the program approaches and curriculum improvements that have been recently discussed in the scholarly literature is important to this alumni assessment because it serves as clues to the interpretation of the data and observations. It also raises questions about the data and observations that will be analyzed? Will any of the above program approaches or curriculum improvements be evident in the data or specifically mentioned in the observations? If so, in what context will they be mentioned or observed? Will they be mentioned as a significant curriculum gap? Or will it be an area that is regarded as strength in the program? Perhaps, it will be seen as an area that needs additional coverage?

Having similar importance is actual alumni assessments that have been performed on MPA programs. Surprisingly, there was not a significant number of works found which have a specific focus on MPA programs. Only three assessments were found which were similar to the alumni assessment being presented in this capstone project. Among the three, only one was a university / college based alumni assessment. The remaining two were assessments of state administrators who have obtained the MPA degree.

King, Britton and Missik performed an alumni assessment on two MPA Programs with different mission statements to better understand how different or similar the program experience is and how that difference or similarity may affect alumni (1996). They found that even though they represent rhetorically different programs, potentially different program experiences, and they "gained" different things from their programs, the alumni groups seem to agree upon what skills, knowledge and values are important to their career (1996). These results suggest that

MPA alumni may be fairly similar with respect to their perceptions about those things that are important to their careers across differing demographic, regional, and rhetorical or programmatic perspectives (King, Britton and Missik, 1996).

The study found that the items which alumni gained from the MPA programs and what they found as important to their career were very similar. That is, items such as intellectual growth, creative thinking, self-confidence, personal growth, and writing and communication skills were identified in both categories whereas specific skills like policy analysis, budgeting and finance were not ranked as important. Graduate courses in public administration are explicitly about instrumental things (doing research, finance, budgeting, personnel, evaluation, etc.) rather than about growth, development, communication, and critical thinking (King, Britton and Missik, 1996). The authors recommend that public administration programs should focus more on these skills in the future in order for the future worker who, like Drucker's (1994) future worker, has the ability to think and acquire knowledge to communicate, and the desire and ability to be a life long learner (King, Britton and Missik, 1996).

A study by Rose and Mohapatra in 1992-1993 surveyed state administrators from the fifty states and Puerto Rico and found different findings from the King survey just mentioned. This survey included a sample that consisted of MPA graduates, undergraduates holding a bachelor's degree in public administration, certified public managers and those not holding any degree. The authors found that MPA graduates ranked organizational behavior and interpersonal relations, knowledge of political institutions and processes in the state government, program evaluation and research methodology and policy analysis with higher importance than those did with a bachelor degree in public administration.

In a similar study by Rose in 1996, a survey was sent to 5,980 state administrators of various educational backgrounds. Approximately 22% of the sample had a bachelor degree and 66% had a graduate degree. When asked to rank the importance of fields of knowledge included in Public Administration programs, organizational behavior, budget operations and knowledge of political institutions were among the top three amongst males. Females had chosen a reverse rank order for budget operations and knowledge of political institutions. Because this study included only 66% participation of graduate students, it appears to be out of the scope of this capstone project. Although it would be inappropriate to generalize from one study, it is interesting to note that the remaining 34% of the sample did still consider the curriculum guided NASPAA courses as being important to their career.

Each of the three alumni assessments reviewed offered different outcomes to what alumni / state administrators categorize as being important to their careers. There were some similarities amongst the state administrators. Both studies sampling state administrators identified knowledge of political institutions as being important. However, the MPA Program study fielded results that were directed more toward improving one's personal skills.

The final area to be examined in the review of literature is alumni assessment design. The depth of published work on alumni assessment design specifically for MPA programs is not significant. However, there is a good amount of literature pertaining to alumni assessments at the undergraduate and graduate level for non-MPA related areas of study.

After examining numerous graduate and undergraduate assessments, it was clear that the design of an alumni assessment could be approached in a variety of ways depending on one's interest. Delaney (1997) demonstrates how a well designed instrument can address a broad range of assessment issues including policy concerns of administrators, instructional values of

the faculty, standards of professional practice, and particular goals of a professional degree program.

Delaney's survey included three sections: evaluation section, employment experience and profile of survey alumni. While the evaluation section assessed what alumni learned in the program and what was important to them in their career, the employment section probed the types of positions they had sought, received and the major challenges that they have encountered. The profile section gathered data on age, gender, race, income, financing of college and undergraduate education. Although the subject of her alumni assessment is graduate education, Delaney (1997) illustrates how alumni survey research can be used effectively in assessment studies, particularly of professional graduate-level programs.

This capstone project will perform an alumni assessment of the MPA Program offered by the Center For Public Service. The results of this assessment will lead to an understanding of how well the MPA Program has prepared its students for their careers and, likewise, met its mission. The analysis of the alumni assessment will be enhanced based on the review of literature that has been performed.

Methodology

This capstone project involves an alumni assessment of the MPA Program at the Center For Public Service. By sending a questionnaire to all alumni, the Center hoped to gain an understanding of how well the MPA Program has prepared its students for their careers. An understanding of how well the MPA Program has met its mission was also of interest.

The questionnaire used to gather data for this assessment of alumni was modeled after one used by Delaney in 1995 and one used by the administration at the Center For Public Service. Delaney designed her questionnaire to complete a study of the alumni of a master's degree teacher education program at Boston College. The questionnaire from the administration of the Center For Public Service has been used since 1992 to collect data regarding program assessment of its graduating students.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections: Evaluation of Your Experience at Seton Hall, Your Career and How Our Curriculum Prepared You For It, and Demographic Data. The questionnaires were mailed with a pre-printed label and included a self-addressed return envelope. Postage for the return envelope was not included and was the responsibility of the respondent. However, included in the letter to alumni was a sincere request to assist with the postage in order to minimize costs.

The questionnaire used for this assessment was first designed using both of the above mentioned models as a guide. It was then reviewed and adjusted by the administration and faculty of The Center For Public Service. Once complete, the questionnaire was mailed to approximately 500 alumni of the MPA Program. Any questionnaires that were returned due to an incorrect address were re-mailed if a correct address was found.

The response rate for the mailed questionnaire was 23.4% (117 of 500 were returned). This response rate was well received by the administration of the Center For Public Service. The data were entered into an excel spreadsheet for analysis. The source of the data is primary and the level of measurement for the variables is both nominal and interval. All alumni were encouraged to offer further comments.

The data analysis will be performed, in some instances, by using the measures of central tendency and the measures of dispersion. More specifically, mean, mode, median, standard deviation and skewness will be used where applicable. Data will be presented using frequency and percentage distributions, graphs and contingency tables. Specific questions from the questionnaire will be used to understand how successful the MPA Program has met its mission. Overall analysis of mission and evaluation of program will include both the nominal and ordinal data as well as the comments offered by the alumni.

It is unclear as to whether or not the response is representative of the entire alumni base. Also, there was some confusion as to whether an alumnus completed a research seminar or practicum as their capstone experience. In some instances alumni completed both responses. The staff at the Center For Public Service researched all questionable responses and the data were adjusted accordingly.

Presentation of Results

The objective of this capstone project is to perform an alumni assessment of the MPA Program at the Center For Public Service in order to understand how well it has met its mission and prepared its students for their careers. The results from the data collected in the questionnaire will be presented in three sections: sample description, assessment of graduate education including faculty and facilities, and selected analyses.

The description of the sample is presented in Tables A, B, C, D and E found in the appendix. This sample consisted of 117 alumni, a 23.4% return. As shown in Tables A, B and C, 74% (87 alumni) graduated during the seven year span of 1994 to 2000. About 23% (27 alumni) graduated between the 10 year span of 1984 and 1993 and 3% (3 alumni) had unknown graduation years.

Additionally, 56% (66 alumni) had an MPA concentration in Healthcare or an MHA degree. The Public Service concentration, the second largest, had 26% representation (30 alumni). The Nonprofit concentration accounted for 13% (15 alumni). Lastly, there were 3% (4 alumni) who had a concentration in Court Administration, and 1% (1 alumni), in both the MIS and the unknown category. As evident, Healthcare and MHA alumni who graduated during the years from 1994 to 2000 made up the majority in this assessment.

Table D in the appendix portrays the alumni respondents by gender, ethnicity, student status and concentration. Females accounted for 60% (70 alumni) of the sample while males represented 38% (45 alumni). 2% (2 alumni) had unknown gender. This relationship between female and male respondents held true within the Healthcare, MHA, and Court Administration concentrations. The Nonprofit and Public Service concentrations each had more male than

female alumni respondents. The Public Service concentration was 66% male (20 alumni), while the Nonprofit concentration was 60% male (9 alumni).

The ethnicity of the alumni was primarily European / Caucasian, which consisted of 79% (92 alumni). African – American made up the second largest ethnic group with 10% (12 alumni). The Hispanic / Latino, Other and Unknown ethnic groups each had 3% (4, 3, 4 respectively) representation. Finally, Asian – American accounted for 2% (2 alumni) of the sample. European / Caucasian ethnicity was the majority in each concentration. The African – American group, the second largest group, had concentration representation of 7 alumni in Healthcare, 3 in Public Service and 1 in both Nonprofit and the MHA Program.

Student Status of the sample was 65% (76 alumni) part-time. Full-time status accounted for 22% (26 alumni) of the sample while 11% (13 alumni) were categorized as mixture. 2% (2 alumni) had unknown student status. Based on percentages amongst concentrations, full-time students were primarily located in MHA, Public Service and Nonprofit.

Table E in the appendix displays current job situation, current job in organization hierarchy and employer – organization type. The job situation of the sample was 85% full-time, 7% employed part-time by choice, 4% unemployed - but not seeking employment, 3% unknown and 1% employed part-time - but seeking full time employment. An alumnus' current job in their organization's hierarchy was as follows: 29% mid level manager (Bureau Chief, Division, Director), 20% first line supervisor / manager, 15% in both upper level manager (Deputy Commissioner, VP) and other, 11% non-supervising professional, 9% Director / Commissioner / CEO and 1% unknown. Therefore, 60% of the sample currently works in the mid level manager or below position in their organizational hierarchy.

The employer–organization type of the sample was 45% Healthcare (53 alumni), 21 % Government and Nonprofit (25 and 24 alumni respectively), 8% Private sector (9 alumni) and 5% (6 alumni) unknown. Furthermore, the Healthcare category could be divided into two sub-categories, Healthcare - Nonprofit and Healthcare - Private. When divided into sub-categories, Healthcare - Nonprofit accounts for 35% (41 alumni) of the sample while Healthcare–Private accounts for 10% (12 alumni).

The Private Sector accounts for 18% of the sample (Private Sector – 8% and Healthcare – Private – 10%). This percentage is almost as large as that of the Nonprofit and Public Service concentrations. The actual Private Sector percentage may be larger than 18% because not all alumni identified that they were either in the private sector or the nonprofit area of the healthcare field. Only those alumni that volunteered that they were in the private sector side of healthcare were counted in the calculation. One may assume that the true Private Sector representation could be greater than all concentrations other than that of Healthcare Nonprofit. This is quite surprising, though understandable, given that this is a Master of Public Administration Program.

Finally, the average age of this sample was 42 and 5 months. The average time that a respondent has occupied his / her current position is 4 years, 11 months. The mode of the courses taken in the typical fall semester was 2.00.

The second section of the presentation of results will be dedicated to the assessment of graduate education including facilities and faculty. This presentation will examine the assessment results in the following sections: graduate curriculum, faculty and facility and overall satisfaction of the MPA Program.

Table 1 on page 22 presents the results for the graduate curriculum, the improvement of skills and the assessment of values. The question was asked of the alumni, “How much did you

learn in each of these areas from your coursework in our program?" A four-point scale was provided with 1 representing "nothing," and 4 equaling "a great amount." The table shows that the alumni felt the strongest areas of the curriculum were decision-making and problem solving, organizations and their behavior, and policy and program design, implementation and evaluation. Each of these areas had a mean greater than or equal to 3.39, a mode and median of 4.00 and a standard deviation between .58 and .61. The standard deviation informs us that the data are dispersed somewhat close to the mean. The skewness in the numbers are, in order from above, -1.04, -1.38 and -.66. This indicates that the data is negatively skewed and the mean may be artificially low. Since the data for the first two areas could be considered negatively skewed, the median can be used instead of the mean for measurement purposes. In this situation the median is 4.00 for both decision-making and problem solving.

Courses in Managing the Budget Process, Political / Legal Institutions and processes, and Human Resource Management were considered areas where alumni learned "an adequate amount." The mean for these courses ranged from 3.2 to 3.28. The three lowest ranked classes assessed, in order of mean, were: Budgeting Skills, Information management and Computer Applications. The corresponding mean for each of these courses were 3.07, 3.06 and 2.64. The Computer Application course ranked the lowest of courses assessed and was the only course to drop below a mean of 3.00 on the scale. The skewness for Computer Applications was a -.17, the most unskewed of all of the courses.

Using the same scale, alumni were asked, "To what extent have your skills in the following areas been improved by taking our courses? Using the mean once again, alumni felt that the MPA Program had improved their critical thinking / analytical skills and research skills

the greatest. Written skills did not fall too far behind research skills and oral skills ranked the lowest with a mean of 3.17.

Table 1 Assessment of Graduate Education

Assessment of Graduate Curriculum					
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.58	4.00	4.00	0.58	-1.04
Organizations and their behavior	3.58	4.00	4.00	0.59	-1.38
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.46	4.00	4.00	0.61	-0.66
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	3.39	4.00	3.00	0.63	-0.55
Managing the Budget Process	3.28	3.00	3.00	0.70	-0.45
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	3.27	3.00	3.00	0.63	-0.29
Human Resource Management	3.20	3.00	3.00	0.77	-0.84
Budgeting skills	3.07	3.00	3.00	0.70	-0.41
Information Management	3.06	3.00	3.00	0.69	-0.40
Computer applications	2.84	3.00	3.00	0.81	-0.17
Improvement of Skills					
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.55	4.00	4.00	0.69	-1.70
Research Skills	3.47	4.00	4.00	0.72	-1.40
Written skills	3.35	4.00	4.00	0.84	-1.46
Oral skills	3.17	3.00	3.00	0.85	-1.01
Assessment of Values					
Working collaboratively	3.58	4.00	4.00	0.58	-1.01
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.53	4.00	4.00	0.60	-0.86
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.44	4.00	3.00	0.59	-0.54
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.40	4.00	4.00	0.73	-1.18
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.31	4.00	4.00	0.81	-0.94
Serving one's community	3.30	4.00	3.00	0.75	-0.93
Serving one's professional organization	3.29	3.00	3.00	0.69	-0.76
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	3.07	3.00	3.00	0.80	-0.54

Scale: 1 = nothing, 2 = not enough, 3 = adequate amount, 4 = a great deal

When asked, "To what extent have the following values been discussed or encouraged in our courses and our other programs or services," alumni found the strongest values to be working

collaboratively and abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession. Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, focusing on quality of life and / or public policy, assuming leadership positions in one's community and serving one's community each had a respectable mean between 3.44 and 3.30. Scoring the lowest with a mean of 3.07 was assuming leadership positions in one's community.

Table 2 on page 24 presents the results regarding the Internship. 27%, or 32 alumni, participated in an internship. A five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," was used for this question. Using the mean, the highest rated areas of the internship were the exposure to real world politics, ability to relate theory to practice, and the valuable experience gained from it for use later on in one's career. There was concurrence that during the internship alumni were given good direction and support from the MPA faculty, had a variety of assignments, were left with a new awareness of the obligations of a professional in the field and to the public, and assisted them in deciding upon a career. Alumni "somewhat agreed" to the statement that the internship assisted them in getting a job. It is also evident from the results that the alumni were able to improve their written communication skills and analytical skills more than their research skills or their oral presentation skills during the internship.

Using the same five-point scale, Table F in the appendix provides results surrounding the Research Seminar and the Practicum. 76%, or 89 alumni, took the Research Seminar and 19%, 22 alumni, participated in the Practicum. Alumni strongly felt that in each of these experiences they were able to relate theory to practice. The mean for the Research Seminar and the Practicum was 4.39 and 4.43 respectively. Alumni also agreed that they received good direction and support from faculty members of the MPA Program. Alumni felt strongly that the Research Seminar and the Practicum improved their analytical, written communication and research skills.

Oral presentation skills were rated the lowest in the improvement of skills, with mean of 3.79 for the Research Seminar and 4.05 for the Practicum. Taking into account the negative skewness in the data, both the research seminar and the practicum were overall rated strong.

Table 2 Assessment of Internship

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Prob. > Z > 3
Assessment of Internship					
My internship exposed me to real-world politics	4.55	5.00	5.00	0.66	-1.23
My internship related classroom theory to real world practice	4.16	4.00	4.00	0.82	-0.70
i received experience which i found valuable later in my career	4.10	5.00	4.00	0.96	-0.96
i had an interesting variety of assignments during my internship	3.94	5.00	4.00	1.18	-0.91
i was left with a new awareness of the obligations of a professional in the field and to the public	3.93	5.00	4.00	1.28	-1.02
My internship helped me decide upon a career	3.88	5.00	4.00	1.30	-0.79
i was given good direction and support by the MPA faculty	3.87	5.00	4.00	1.18	-0.79
i was given good direction and support by the agency	3.68	3.00	4.00	1.17	-0.66
My internship aided me in getting a job	3.39	5.00	3.00	1.53	-0.23
Improvement of Skills					
Written communication skills	3.97	5.00	4.00	0.95	-0.43
Analytical Skills	3.87	5.00	4.00	0.99	-0.38
Research Skills	3.72	3.00	4.00	1.00	-0.09
Oral presentation skills	3.55	3.00	3.00	1.03	0.06

Scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2 =disagree, 3 =somewhat agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Feedback on the Student Community Assistance Project (SCAP) was given by 7 alumni, or 6%. Five alumni stated that they participated in a SCAP in 1 to 2 courses. Six of the Seven alumni felt that SCAP was a valuable learning experience, provided a "real life experience," and "helped one understand the true meaning of teamwork." One alumnus stated that it was

sometimes a valuable learning experience. They went on to state that it “depended on the project, the team, faculty guidance and the client’s expectations.”

Results for Faculty and Facilities will be the next area to be presented and can be found in Table 3 on page 26. A five-point scale was used to measure alumni’s impression of the faculty as a group. The scale included the ratings of inadequate, below average, average, good, and outstanding. With a mean rating of 4.64, 4.52 and 4.40 respectively, alumni strongly felt that the faculty knew the subject matter, were prepared for class and were able to communicate clearly in class. The faculty’s ability to expose alumni to a variety of points of view, be accessible to students outside of class, and integrate a concern with ethical behavior into the curriculum were more difficult to rank because of their negative skewness. Since negative skewness indicates an artificially low mean, it is likely that these assessment areas may be higher than their mean indicates. Lowest ranked by mean with minimal negative skewness were the areas of academic advising, integrated topics of diversity into the curriculum and integrated technology related applications into the curriculum. Their mean average in their order from above was 4.05, 4.02, 3.76 with skewness of -.64, -.37, -.50.

The results of the evaluation of Facilities are also presented in Table 3. Facilities were ranked on a six-point scale with six representing “don’t know.” Scale points one through five included: very poor, poor, adequate, good and very good. Responses of “six” were excluded to calculate the mean, mode, median, standard deviation and skewness. The library, enrollment services and registration were well received. Each had a mean equal to or greater than 4.00. Meeting spaces, classrooms and computer facilities were more not far behind with a mean no lower than 3.77. All items on the facilities had negative skewness, and a median of 4.00. The standard deviation for each of the areas listed tightly ranged from .92 – 1.10. As a result, this

group was more difficult to measure or rank. According to the alumni, it does appear that one area that needs further improvement is that of the services from the University Career Center. This area finished last with a mean of 3.60 and minimal negative skewness of -.38.

Table 3 Assessment of Faculty and Facilities

Assessment of Faculty					
Knew the subject matter	4.64	5.00	5.00	0.53	-1.13
Had prepared for class prior to its meeting	4.52	5.00	5.00	0.60	-0.84
Were able to communicate clearly in class	4.40	5.00	4.00	0.65	-0.61
Exposed us to a variety of points of view	4.35	4.00	4.00	0.70	-1.23
Were accessible to students outside of class	4.25	5.00	4.00	0.81	-1.09
Integrated a concern with ethical behavior into the curriculum	4.22	5.00	4.00	0.81	-0.73
Provided academic advising	4.05	5.00	4.00	0.93	-0.64
Integrated topics of diversity into the curriculum	4.02	4.00	4.00	0.86	-0.37
Integrated technology related applications into the curriculum	3.76	4.00	4.00	1.05	-0.50
Evaluation of Facilities and Support					
Library	4.12	5.00	4.00	1.02	-1.16
Enrollment Services	4.00	5.00	4.00	0.93	-0.70
Registration process	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.94	-0.79
Meeting spaces	3.89	4.00	4.00	0.93	-0.50
Classrooms	3.81	4.00	4.00	0.92	-0.41
Computer Facilities	3.77	4.00	4.00	1.10	-0.65
Financial Aid services	3.71	5.00	4.00	1.13	-0.35
Services from the University Career Center	3.60	5.00	4.00	1.30	-0.38

Faculty Scale: 1 = inadequate, 2 = below average, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = outstanding

Facility Scale: 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = adequate, 4 = good, 5 = very good, 6 = don't know

Observations provided by alumni can also lend insight into experiences with the University Career Center. One alumnus stated that they were told that the Career Center is more adequate for undergraduates and non-working graduates. Another mentioned that their phone calls were never returned the Career Center.

Alumni's use and impression of department career counseling was also asked in the questionnaire. The results state that 25% (29 alumni) sought career counseling from the MPA /

MHA department. Out of the 25%, 83% (24 alumni) received adequate career counseling from the department. Furthermore, 19% (22 alumni) sought help from the MPA / MHA department in gaining better employment. Out of the 19%, 55%, (12 alumni) received help from the department.

Adequate class scheduling, respect for students and fair treatment of people of color were addressed by this questionnaire. The results for each of these areas were overwhelmingly positive. The detailed results behind these questions can be located in Table G in the appendix.

Table 4 on page 28 presents alumni's satisfaction with their career and impression of what factors were important to their success. Satisfaction of career was evaluated on a five-point scale with the following selections: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, extremely satisfied. Level of responsibility was the highest ranked with a mean of 4.30 and skewness of -1.17. Substantive content of your work, direction of your work and impact of your work on your had a mean range of 4.16 to 4.17. The lowest ranked were prestige associated with your profession with a mean 4.02 and earnings level with a mean of 3.87.

Factors important to an alumnus' career were asked using a five-point scale. The scale consisted of: nothing at all, very little impact, moderate impact, big impact and very big impact. Alumni consider personal competence and hard work as areas that have the most impact. They had, respectively, a mean of 4.63 and 4.59 with negative skewness of -2.54 and -2.17. Ranked third and fourth were network and personal contacts and the MPA / MHA degree. Opportunity / luck finished second from last with a mean of 3.50. The MPA / MHA degree ranked directly in front of an undergraduate degree. The mean for MPA/MHA was 3.85 and the mean for undergraduate education was 3.61. At first look at the mean, it appears that that there is not a considerable difference between the importance of an undergraduate degree and the MPA /

MHA degree. However, mode provides additional information. The mode for the MPA / MHA degree is 5.00 and the mode for the undergraduate degree is 3.00.

Table 4 Assessment – Satisfaction and Importance

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your career?

How important do you consider each of the following was/is to your success?

	Mean	Mode	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Satisfaction of Career					
Level of responsibility you have attained	4.30	5.00	4.00	0.84	-1.17
The substantive content of you work	4.17	5.00	4.00	0.91	-0.86
Overall direction of your career	4.17	5.00	4.00	0.95	-1.10
The impact of you work on your field	4.16	5.00	4.00	0.87	-0.73
The prestige associated with your profession	4.02	5.00	4.00	0.93	-0.59
Your earnings level	3.87	4.00	4.00	0.93	-0.77
Importance to one's success					
Personal competence	4.63	5.00	5.00	0.66	-2.54
Hard work	4.59	5.00	5.00	0.71	-2.17
Network and personal contacts	3.92	4.00	4.00	1.03	-1.00
MPA/MHA degree	3.85	5.00	4.00	1.00	-0.51
Undergraduate education	3.61	3.00	4.00	1.05	-0.30
Opportunity / Luck	3.50	4.00	4.00	1.00	-0.29
Other advanced degrees	3.12	3.00	3.00	1.38	-0.29

Satisfaction Scale:

1= very dissatisfied, 2 =dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied

Importance Scale

Scale: 1= nothing at all, 2 = very little impact, 3 = moderate impact, 4 = big impact, 5 = very big impact

When asked how important the MPA / MHA degree was in preparing alumni for their current / subsequent career, 68% (80 alumni) responded that it is extremely or very important to their career. 20% (23 alumni) responded that the degree was somewhat important to their career. Finally, 6% (7 alumni) felt the degree was not too important and 3% (4 alumni) felt that it was not at all important. Detailed results of this question are located in Table H of the appendix.

Examining the written observations provided for alumni who felt the MPA / MHA degree was somewhat important, not too important or not at all important provided additional

explanations for their response. One alumni stated that, "I have found that most people in the business world don't really understand what the degree is. I worked for an insurance company that served the non profit community. My MPA prepared me to be a better manager, but I still lack a better finance background." A Public Service student had wished that there were more courses in their concentration. A Nonprofit student stated that the program needs to be more diversified because the program was too heavy in the healthcare field. Three students requested that additional budgeting and finance skills be added. Two recommended that more computer / MIS skills be taught in the program. Finally, one student suggested that, "If the focus was on Finance, Marketing, H/R, etc. you would have focused and more portable skills. These concentrations are similar regardless of where you work." One alumnus stated they took the program because they were interested in learning despite the fact that it was not relevant to their career. Finally, one alumnus stated that the topics addressed in the questionnaire were not available when they were enrolled in the program and the degree did not assist them with a career change. Alumni currently working in the healthcare, government or nonprofit fields provided all comments mentioned.

Many positive comments were also evident in the observations. A large number felt that the MPA / MHA program had "quality instructors, and timely and relevant material." Dr. Wish and Dr. Disalvio were mentioned numerous times as being "superb." One student stated "instructors were excellent, course material was challenging and real life examples were used in class to explain theory." Overall, there were many that felt the need to say "thank you" to the MPA Program for a "worthwhile, positive, challenging, experience."

When asked whether or not they would recommend the program to others, 86% of the alumni responded, "Yes, definitely." Additionally, 10% responded with "perhaps." Four alumni

stated "No, probably not." Data for this question can be found in Table I in the appendix. Written observations can also be used to better understand the responses for this question. Reasons why the program would not be recommended were that it was too expensive and that it did not apply to current profession. Reasons why they would recommend the program were plentiful. All written observations for this question are located in Table J in the appendix.

Alumni were also asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the education they received in the MPA / MHA program. These data are provided in Table K in the appendix. 62% (72 alumni) felt "very satisfied" with the level of education received. Another 33% (39 alumni) felt "satisfied" with their learning experience in the MPA Program. In total, 95% of the alumni felt very satisfied or satisfied with the education they received from the MPA / MHA program.

The final section of the results will be the presentation of selected analyses performed on that data. This will include a comparison of an alumnus' job, job status and salary during the time they were enrolled in the program to their current situation. Also, an examination of the graduate curriculum will be presented. This presentation will compare what was learned in the program against what is currently considered to be useful to one's career.

Table L in the appendix compares an alumnus' job, job status, and salary from the time they entered the program to their current situation. Alumni employed full-time increased 4%, or 5 alumni. Only one alumnus is employed part-time and seeking full-time employment. Aside from the 4 unknown alumni, all are either employed or unemployed by choice.

Table L in the appendix also shows the before and after data for an alumnus' current job in their organization hierarchy. Most notably, 33% (39 alumni) moved from a non-supervising professional or first-line supervisor / manager to a higher position. The mid-level manager (Bureau Chief, Division Director) category grew 15% (17 alumni) and the upper-level manager

(Deputy Commissioner, VP) category increased 11% (13 alumni). An increase of 6% (7 alumni) was experienced in the Director / Commissioner / CEO category. The "other" category remained nearly flat with a 2% (2 alumni) increase.

During the time period of entry into the program to the current state, there was also significant movement in salary. The salary categories that represent less than \$25,000 to \$55,000 experienced a 45% decrease (53 alumni). Conversely, the salary categories that represent \$55,001 - \$95,000 or more increased 44% (51 alumni). Lastly, salary data for 2% (2 alumni) was unknown.

Table 5 on page 32 presents a graduate curriculum comparison. This comparison provides a ranking of what alumni learned in the curriculum against what they felt as being important to their career. The purpose of this chart is to identify curriculum strengths and possible curriculum gaps in the MPA / MHA program. The data show that alumni ranked oral skills first and written skills second as being important to their career. Likewise, they respectively ranked the two eighteenth and eleventh as what they learned in the program. They also ranked critical thinking / analytical skills and working collaboratively as third and fourth and just the opposite in the category for what they learned. Organizations and their behavior, the first core course to be ranked, appears eighth in the ranking as what was important to one's career. Similarly, the first core course to be ranked in the category of what was learned was also organizations and their behavior ranked second. The assessment area of assuming leadership in one's organization was ranked twelfth in what was learned, but seventeenth in what was important to one's career. Overall, skills and values were ranked as having more importance to one's career than did the core courses offered in the program. A detail chart showing mean,

mode, median, standard deviation and skewness for the areas considered to be useful to one's career is located in Table M in the appendix.

Table 5 Curriculum Ranking: Importance to Career vs. What was learned

Ranked by Mean

Oral skills	1	18
Written skills	2	11
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3	4
Working collaboratively	4	3
Decision-making and Problem solving	5	1
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	6	5
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	7	8
Organizations and their behavior	8	2
Information Management	9	21
Human Resource Management	10	17
Managing the Budget and financial process	11	15
Research Skills	12	6
Serving one's professional organization	13	14
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	14	7
Budgeting skills	15	19
Serving one's community	16	13
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	17	12
Computer applications	18	22
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	19	16
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	20	9
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	21	10
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	22	20

The last group of charts to be presented will show a similar comparison and ranking, but by concentration rather than by the overall alumni respondents. This analysis may identify

curriculum strengths and gaps within a particular concentration. Before doing this, it is important to better understand the sample.

Table N in the appendix presents a further description of the sample. This table provides information about the current employment of the sample by concentration. These data are important because they provide additional validity for the comparison by concentration that will be presented next. Table N shows that the sample is primarily still working in the field that corresponds to their concentration. Among nonprofit, public service, healthcare and MHA alumni, only about 15% may not be working in the same field as their concentration. This percentage is a worse case guess because in some instances it is not apparent if they are or are not working in their concentration.

Table O in the appendix presents the comparisons between what is useful to one's career and what was learned for the healthcare concentration and the MHA degree. The results for the healthcare concentration appear to mirror the overall results in some ways. This is logical given that this is the largest group of alumni that responded. It is similar in that oral skills and written skills are ranked as being important along with other values and skills. However, unlike the overall sample, working collaboratively is ranked first in importance and learned. Also, managing the budget process is ranked eighth and is the first course which appears in the ranking. There appears to be possible curriculum gaps with oral skills, written skills, managing the budget process and information management. Strengths include working collaboratively, working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession, decision making and problem solving and organizations and their behavior.

Observations from Healthcare students complement the results reported in Table O. Alumni stated the need for more financial courses, computer courses, public relations, networking skills, ethics, one on one guidance and a buddy system for pre-service students. One student mentioned the need for a survey course because LTC demographics require it. Many felt that having faculty in New Jersey healthcare was a tremendous advantage. Also the "health management courses were the best" stated one student.

The results for the MHA degree are a bit different. Note that, according to Table N, the majority of MHA alumni respondents work in a Hospital or Medical Center. Decision-making and Problem solving is ranked first in importance and fourth in learned. Budgeting skills, the first core course, appears second in rank of importance and fifteenth in what was learned. Managing the budget and financial process is ranked sixth in importance and fourteenth in area learned. Based on these responses MHA curriculum gaps appear to be present in budgeting, oral skills, information management, research skills and computer applications. Strengths are critical thinking / analytical skills, abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession, working collaboratively and decision making and problem solving.

Observations from the MHA alumni stated that that the faculty was outstanding and that the program was very diverse. It was also stated that the financial courses need to be taught in two part courses. Also, one on-line student stated that the group work should be limited and it should schedule review classes for the ACHE exam immediately following the MHA coursework. Finally, one student stated that the MPA degree was "soft" compared to the MBA CPA or RN.

Table P details the same data for the Public Service and Nonprofit concentrations. Similar to Healthcare and the MHA, Public Service and Nonprofit each rank skills and values

high in importance. Curriculum gaps may occur in oral skills and written skills for both concentrations. It appears that while critical thinking appears to be a strength in the Public Service concentration, it is a curriculum gap for the Nonprofit concentration. Budgeting skills are considered more important to Nonprofit alumni than to the Public Service alumni. Policy and program design are each ranked strong in terms of what was learned, but considered not be as important by both the Public Service and Nonprofit concentrations. However, Healthcare and MHA have ranked Policy and program design higher in importance. Besides the gaps that have been mentioned, it appears that what has been learned in the curriculum meets that which is considered important to the career.

Nonprofit students stated in their observations that this program was a good opportunity to “think outside the box,” and that there was “a good blend of practical knowledge and theory.” One student suggested the following should be added to topics for discussion: joint ventures with corporations or for profit ventures, strategic philanthropy and venture philanthropy. Some alumni recommended that more computer and financial courses be added and less healthcare related examples used.

Public service students also recommended that more budgeting and computer classes be added. One student suggested that more guest speakers from the field need to be brought in to address the students. Overall, comments were extremely positive. Note that all further comments are presented in Table Q in the appendix.

This capstone project attempts to better understand how well the MPA Program has met its mission and prepared its students for the career. The results just presented are the compilation of the data retrieved through the mailed questionnaire. These results have been presented to help understand the perceptions of the alumni in order to arrive at a conclusion.

Conclusion

The objective of this capstone project is to better understand how well the MPA Program has met its mission and prepared its students for their careers. In order to accomplish this objective, an alumni assessment was developed and mailed to the MPA Program's alumni base.

This topic was important because this alumni assessment could possibly assist the faculty and administration in understanding how to better prepare current and future students of the program. It is also important for it will help answer the question of whether or not the MPA Program has accomplished its mission.

The mission of the Center For Public Service is as follows:

"Our MPA Degree is designed to develop servant leaders for management positions in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. With an interdisciplinary, collaborative and culturally diverse setting, we are dedicated to providing high quality graduate degree and certificate programs that are intellectually stimulating, ethically oriented and have a theory to practice."

Having said that, has the mission of the MPA Program been successfully met based on the data retrieved from this alumni assessment? Yes, it absolutely has been met. Has the MPA program successfully prepared its students for their career? Yes, it has.

The data and observations from the alumni support the success of this program. 95% of the alumni were either very satisfied or satisfied with the education they received in the MPA Program. 86% stated that they would recommend the MPA program to others. An additional 10% said that they would perhaps recommend the program. The most stated reason why one would only "perhaps" recommend the MPA program was because it was considered to be expensive. Although this is an acceptable reason, it is outside of the scope for this paper.

The evaluation of the curriculum by the alumni was very positive. Ratings from the Internship, Research Seminar and Practicum were also extremely strong. The data also showed

that alumni have gained mobility in their organization's hierarchical position and within their salary grouping. Finally, the voluntary comments provided by the alumni were overwhelmingly positive. In the comments, the faculty and curriculum were applauded repeatedly.

Knowing whether or not this sample represents the feelings and recommendations of the entire alumni base is a limitation of this study. Because no calculations were performed to determine what percentage of an entire concentration is represented in this study, it is not valid to assume that these results would be representative of all alumni.

Looking back at the review of literature, it is evident that the field of public administration education is complex. The field has many identity conflicts that have been debated for quite some time. After analyzing the results and reading the observations from the alumni, I was personally impressed by how the MPA Program at the Center For Public Service has adapted and succeeded in an environment that has so many conflicts associated with it. For instance, Ventriess in 1991 recommended that MPA programs need mutual learning to assist with conquering the theory to practice learning gap. It appears from this assessment that the MPA Program at Seton Hall has succeeded in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Besides the success of SCAP, many students also stated in their observations that the faculty provided examples to bridge gaps between theory and practice. More importantly, a better bridge between theory and practice was absent from the recommendations provided by the alumni.

Leadership was discussed in the review of literature as an area that should be improved. It appears from the data presented here that students are receiving an education geared toward leadership. Decision-making and problem solving skills as well as Critical thinking / analytical skills were ranked in the top five as being important to one's career and in the top four of what was learned. Also, it appeared in the data that the MPA Program provided too much learning in

the area of assuming leadership in one's organization then what was considered important to one's career. This is not negative for I do not think that too much leadership training could be considered detrimental to any student.

Ventriss also warned of the problems of an interdisciplinary setting. It appears that the MPA Program as a whole has not overextended itself because there is no indication of this in the data and observations. Somewhat related was the rating of integration of topics of diversity into the curriculum. This was deemed "good" by the alumni. It was not the strongest in its category, but it still had an acceptable mean.

Regarding the "best place debate," by Wish and Mirabella, there was no indication that alumni working in the nonprofit field were dissatisfied with the education they received in the MPA program. As mentioned in the results, some alumni made recommendations as to the improvement of topics discussed in the curriculum, but all were satisfied with their experience.

Finally, there was no mention by the alumni that a merger of the CPM and MPA would be positive or negative. There was also no mention of the internalization of public administration education.

The results of this study closely resemble those by King, Britton and Missik in 1996. That is, skills are more important to one's career than the subject matter of the core curriculum. What is notable in this study is that possible curriculum gaps did not exist in all skill areas. Skill gaps appeared to exist only in oral and written skills. Expectations of skill training for critical thinking / analytical skills, working collaboratively, decision-making and problem solving, and working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds were met.

The gap in writing skills is a bit confusing because one would think that students of a graduate program should have already developed writing skills. Should a graduate program be

responsible for improving the writing skills of their students? As a student, I know that there is a significant amount of written assignments throughout the course of this graduate program. I also feel that my skills naturally improved as a result of this. At the time I enrolled in the MPA program, I did not expect to have a class on writing skills nor did I think there should be one. Again, it seems that a student's writing skills should already be developed before entering a graduate program. However, a course dedicated to the art of writing may be required in the future.

Despite the emphasis on skills, the core curriculum continues to be very important to the MPA Program. Looking at the curriculum gaps between what was viewed as important to one's career and what was learned only at the overall level masks what is occurring at the concentration level. By examining the curriculum gaps at a more detailed level, it is evident that different core courses remain important to individual concentrations.

Areas of overall improvement for the MPA program to consider for future students are oral skills, written skills, integration of technology into the curriculum, information management, human resource management and budgeting. Perhaps, additional oral presentations could be added to all courses. Presenters could be required to prepare their material in Powerpoint. This may be an additional way to improve computer skills. Excel should be used in all financial and research courses. Teaching financial functions, pivot tables, auto-filters, etc. may increase a student's computer skills. One alumnus suggested that financial courses need to be taught in two parts. Perhaps this may improve the gap for financial courses.

Most importantly, The MPA Program must continue down the same path that it is currently on. It must not change its mission or goal, but just improve in areas that may contain curriculum gaps. There are many facets of this program that are working very well. The data

and observations presented confirm this as fact. The most popular recommendations given by the alumni have been included in this paper. However, there was no way that all comments and recommendations could be presented. Hopefully, the faculty and administration will read through the comments provided by the alumni, located in Tables J and Q of the appendix, and incorporate the recommendations into future planning.

The results from this alumni assessment can act as a guide in determining where improvements need to be made. Possible curriculum gaps have been identified by concentration and for the program overall. Hopefully, these results will become a tool to assist the faculty and administration in preparing future students for a career in the public or private sector.

Appendix

Table A: Description of Sample: Graduation Year and Concentration

Description of Sample: Graduation Year and Concentration									
Graduation year	Nonprofit	Healthcare	Public Service	MIS	Court Admin	MHA	Unknown	Total	Percent
1984	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	2%
1985	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
1986	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	6	5%
1987	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3	3%
1988	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	4	3%
1989	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1%
1990	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1%
1991	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2%
1992	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	5	4%
1993	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	3%
1994	2	5	1	-	1	-	-	9	8%
1995	1	7	-	-	-	-	1	9	8%
1996	2	4	5	-	1	-	-	12	10%
1997	2	6	4	-	1	-	-	13	11%
1998	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	12	10%
1999	2	5	2	-	-	3	-	12	10%
2000	-	4	5	-	1	10	-	20	17%
Unknown	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	3%
Total	15	53	30	1	4	13	1	117	100%
Percent of Total	13%	45%	26%	1%	3%	11%	1%		

Table B: Description of Sample: Year of Graduation

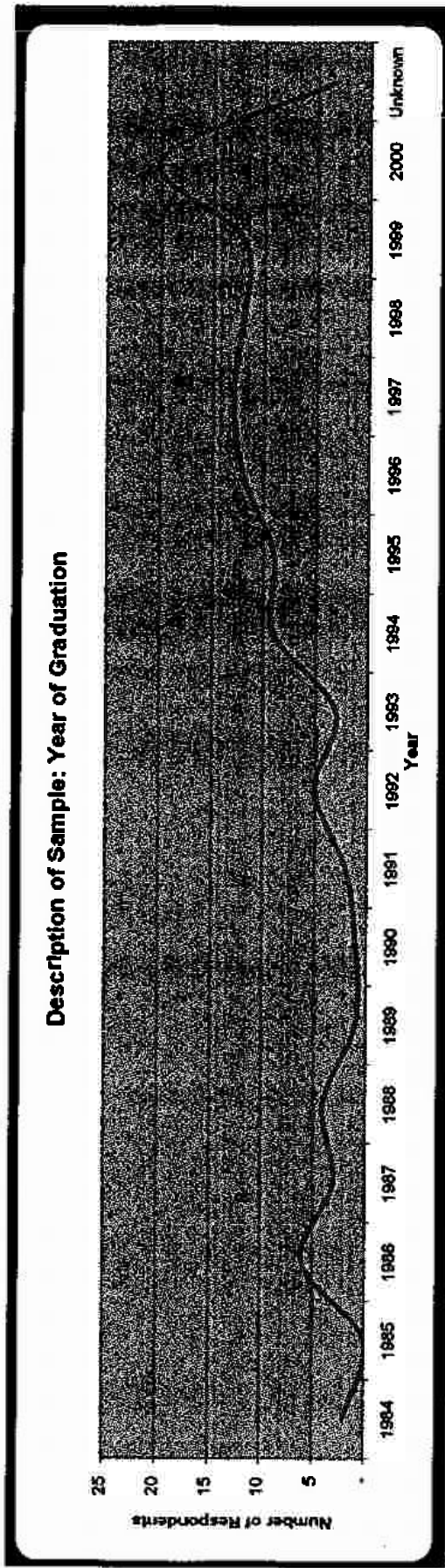


Table C: Concentration of Alumni

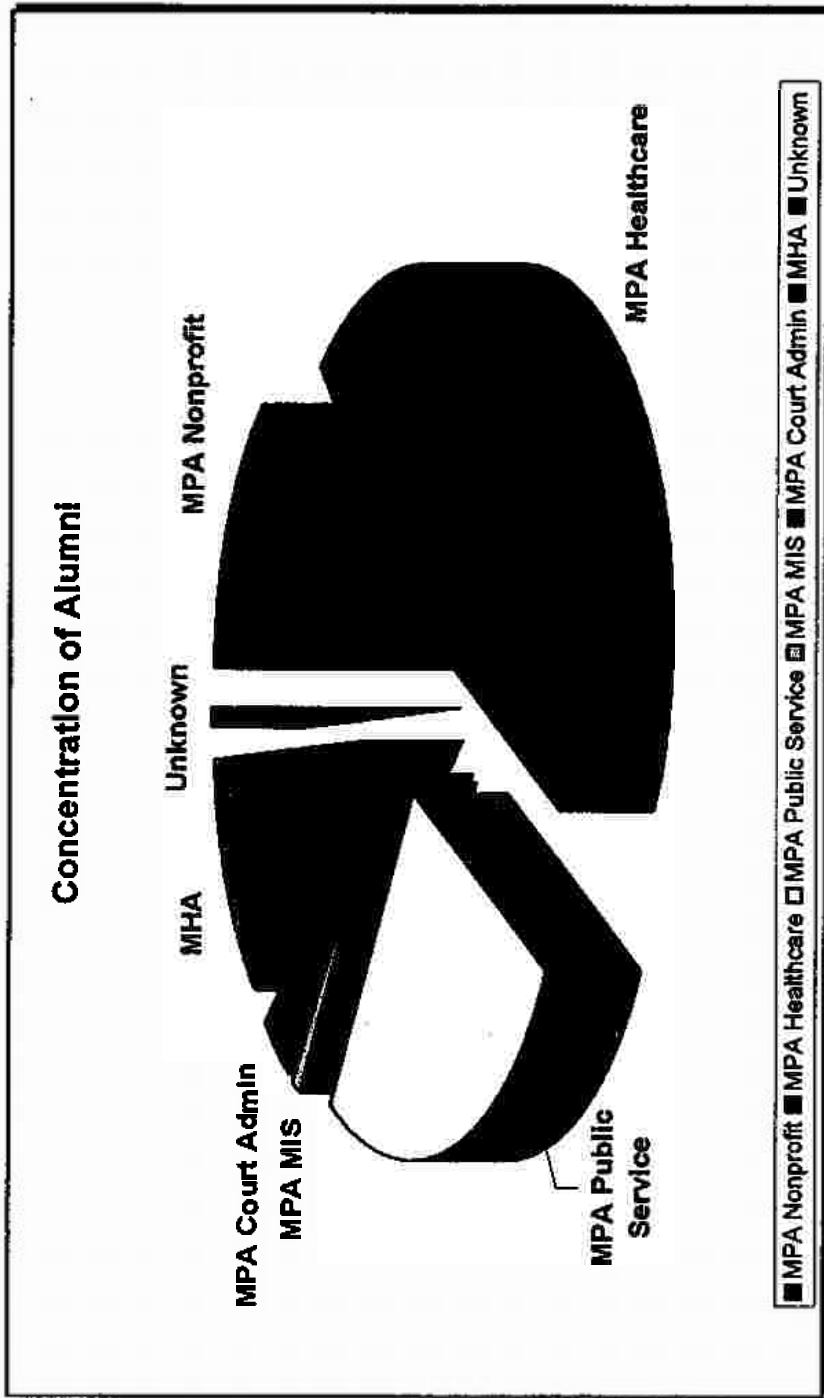


Table D. Description of Sample: Gender, Ethnicity, Student Status, and Concentration

Description of Sample: Gender, Ethnicity, Student Status and Concentration									
	Nonprofit	Healthcare	Public Service	MIS	Court Admin	MHA	Unknown	Total	Percent
<u>Gender</u>									
Male	9	11	20	-	1	4	-	45	38%
Female	6	41	10	-	3	9	1	70	60%
Unknown	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	2%
Total	15	53	30	1	4	13	1	117	100%
<u>Ethnic Background</u>									
Asian/American	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2%
African-/American	1	7	3	-	-	1	-	12	10%
Hispanic/Latino	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	4	3%
European/Caucasian	14	41	24	-	3	9	1	92	79%
Other	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	3%
Unknown	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	4	3%
Total	15	53	30	1	4	13	1	117	100%
<u>Student Status</u>									
Full Time	4	8	8	-	-	6	-	26	22%
Part Time	8	39	20	-	3	6	-	76	65%
Mixture	3	5	2	-	1	1	1	13	11%
Unknown	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	2%
Total	15	53	30	1	4	13	1	117	100%

Table E: Description of Sample: Current Job / Status and Employer

Description of Sample: Current Job / Status and Employer	
	Total Sample Percent of Total
Current Job Situation	
Employed full-time	84 72%
Employed full-time, but seeking a new position	15 13%
Employed part-time by choice	8 7%
Employed part-time, but seeking full-time employment	1 1%
Unemployed, but not seeking employment	5 4%
Attending school full-time and not employed	0 0%
Attending school full-time and employed part time	0 0%
Unknown	4 3%
Total	117 100%
Current Job in Organization Hierarchy	
Non-supervising Professional	13 11%
First-line supervisor/manager	23 20%
Mid-level manager (Bureau Chief, Division Director)	34 29%
Upper-level manager (Deputy Commissioner, VP)	18 15%
Director/Commissioner/CEO	11 9%
Other	17 15%
Unknown	1 1%
Total	117 100%
Employer - Organization Type	
Government Sector	25 21%
Nonprofit Sector	24 21%
Healthcare Total (Nonprofit and Private)	53 45%
Nonprofit	41 35%
Private	12 10%
Private sector	9 8%
Unknown	6 5%
Total	117 100%

Table F: Assessment of Research Seminar and Practicum

Assessment Area	Mean	Mode	Median	SD	Skewness
Assessment of Research Seminar During the research seminar I related theory to practice by relating the scholarly literature to a problem of interest to me I was given good direction and support by the research seminar faculty member I received experience which I found valuable later in my career	4.39 4.06 4.05	5.00 5.00 5.00	5.00 4.00 4.00	0.77 1.10 1.02	-1.28 -1.11 -1.03
Improvement of Skills - Research Seminar Research Skills Written communication skills Analytical Skills Oral presentation skills	4.42 4.38 4.31 3.79	5.00 5.00 5.00 5.00	5.00 5.00 4.00 4.00	0.83 0.88 0.79 1.11	-1.43 -1.57 -1.22 -0.53
Assessment of the Practicum My practicum related classroom theory to real world practice My practicum exposed me to real-world politics I was given good direction and support by the MPA faculty member I was given good direction and support by the agency I received experience which I found valuable later in my career	4.43 4.37 4.29 4.00 4.00	5.00 5.00 5.00 5.00 4.00	5.00 4.00 5.00 4.00 4.00	0.87 0.68 1.19 1.05 0.86	-1.52 -0.63 -1.80 -1.15 -0.55
Improvement of Skills - Practicum Analytical Skills Written communication skills Research Skills Oral presentation skills	3.90 3.90 2.07 4.38 4.33 4.19 4.05	4.00 4.00 1.00 5.00 5.00 5.00 5.00	4.00 4.00 2.00 4.00 4.00 4.00 4.50	1.14 1.02 1.33 0.67 0.73 0.87 1.28	-1.15 -1.10 1.23 -0.63 -0.63 -0.40 -1.45

Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Table G: Respect, Class Scheduling and a question for People of Color only

Assessment Area	Mean	Mode	Median	SD	Skewness
Respect for all Students I experienced no sexual harassment as a student Sexual harassment is not tolerated in this MPA / MHA program	4.72	5.00	5.00	0.60	-2.52
All students, regardless of gender and sexual orientation, are treated fairly in the MPA / MHA program The MPA / MHA program was responsive to the needs of female as well as male students	4.68	5.00	5.00	0.52	-1.74
Class Scheduling Usually MPA/MHA classes were scheduled at times and days (evenings, weekends) convenient for me Courses were scheduled with adequate frequency while I was in the program There was sufficient flexibility in scheduling to allow me to take courses suitable to my career interests	4.54	5.00	5.00	0.65	-1.33
People of Color only Racism is not tolerated in this MPA / MHA program. People of color are treated fairly in the MPA / MHA program The MPA / MHA program was responsive to the needs of students of color	4.50	5.00	5.00	0.73	-1.53
	4.52	5.00	5.00	0.64	-0.98
	4.40	5.00	5.00	0.76	-1.06
	4.28	5.00	4.00	0.85	-1.27
	4.62	5.00	5.00	0.50	-0.53
	4.61	5.00	5.00	0.58	-1.22
	4.38	5.00	5.00	0.80	-0.84

Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Table J: Recommendation of Degree- Further Comments

Y -Faculty of MPA/MHA are excellent
No, probably not. Not applicable to current profession
Y -Library and Computer Labs. Excellent professional network, strong curriculum, advanced degree essential for job growth potential
The MHA on line is superbly run by outstanding faculty.
Y I enjoyed the challenge. SHU is a great school and the MPA is worth the time
Y -Excellent program and outstanding faculty
Y-provides a good foundation for advancement
Y-The online team were very supportive. Learned from team members as well as faculty
Y-The program enhanced both my oral and written skills
Y-it is a good blend of practical knowledge and theory
Y- program offered a comprehensive format balancing practical application and theory. These are critical areas essential for managers in today's public organizations. Majority of teaching staff were bright, attentive, knowledgeable and fair.
No, probably not in my experience, an MBA would have been better. I have found that most people in the business world don't really understand what the degree is. I worked for an insurance company that served the non profit community. My MPA prepared me to be a better manager, but I still lack a better finance background.
Perhaps. The program was expensive and I think more one on one guidance could / should be provided to students.
Y - instructors were excellent and course material was challenging, used real life examples in class to explain theory. Learned immensely from other students.
Y - great faculty, well prepared, very related to career and advancement
Y - well rounded, critical thinking skills acquired, analytical skills, good faculty.
Y- overall the program was good. Would have liked more classes in my concentration. Being a full time student, it was difficult to relate to real world situations. Now, while working, I refer often to class texts.
Y-It provided you with an opportunity to think outside the box. The experience was one of growth and exploration.
Perhaps, I probably would but it is very expensive and I would be concerned about faculty turnover
Y - the program is worthwhile to anyone in healthcare management
Y - strong curriculum, diverse background of faculty
Y- Competent professors who have the best interests of the students at heart.
Y-I believe the education I received in our MPA program will greatly assist me in achieving my career goals.
Y- diverse program from prestigious school.
Y- supportive of students, good clerical and administration support, good faculty.
Y- Comprehensive, respectful, high quality education
Perhaps - not financially competitive with other schools
Perhaps - based on my positive experience
Yes- Very good program when I graduated 10 years ago and I've heard its now improved.
Yes- stimulating, Faculty- well informed and very helpful
Y - Outstanding faculty, curriculum and overall great experience
Y - good program
Perhaps, Acquired a fountain of knowledge; and the staff was extremely helpful and prepared; prestigious institution. Degree has helped my career advancement
Yes, I found the teaching staff accessible and flexible and knowledgeable of subject matter. As part time student with full time job I experienced the benefits of the program on the job as I progressed through to graduation
Program is worth the money invested
Yes, Convenience of the online program. It would be very difficult for me to attend school, work full time in a job requiring 40+ hours a week with 2 children and a husband working in another country.
Yes, I gained a lot of positive experience through the program. Most classes were interesting, informative and beneficial.
Yes, Seton Hall well respected facility and MPA Program met my expectations and needs for advanced education.
Yes, it was a very good program.
Yes, the courses, along with the opportunity to interact and network with others in my field was valuable- allowing me to grow professionally.
Yes, the staff was always accessible and the program was current and relevant
Perhaps, only if they were already in a management position. Unfortunately, although I feel that I learned much, the program is not well respected in the field and particularly in some healthcare systems. MPA/MHA considered "soft degree" vs. RN, MBA, CPA, JD. No opportunities to strengthen oral communication skills.
Yes, Curriculum keeps pace with public sector
Yes, the program exposed me to a whole new world of opportunity in and out of the classroom. It made a very positive impact on my professional and personal life.
Yes, I have! Several colleagues are currently enrolled in program
Perhaps, I think it's a comprehensive program that can benefit people in this field or looking to get in this field
Yes, it was a great academic and life experience while learning new skills

Table J. Recommendation of Degree - Further Comments

Yes. This program was very valuable in my position as VP in Hospital setting
Yes, the core curriculum and staff have a working knowledge of the current environment
Perhaps, I found the quality of classes depended largely on the professor and the same class taught by different instructors during the same semester often had difference in quality, content and workload.
Yes, I have improved my abilities in various areas. The degree is also very marketable.
Yes, Excellent academic program. Excellent staff- especially Dr Wish- terrific leader, extremely open to student's ideas and perspectives.
Yes, excellent program with flexibility
Yes, the program was comprehensive and the faculty was excellent.
Yes, it provided me information in nearly all areas of public management which are essential for a supervisor and or administrator
Yes, because I felt that the education I received has benefited me in my career. The department supportive of my needs and abilities during my pregnancy
Yes. Feel the MPA program is comprehensive in scope and provided a broad view of the healthcare system
Yes, it's an essential stepping stone to becoming a successful and effective leader in Public Sector.
Yes, the coursework was interesting, applicable and appropriately challenging. Excellent faculty and a community minded program.
Yes, solid understanding of skills to the environment of working in non profit sector.
Yes the instructors were knowledgeable, accessible and flexible.
Yes, the leadership skills
Yes, I have over the years
No, it was too expensive for the education I received
Yes, I thought it was a good program. Faculty was very experienced and willing to help students in every respect.
Yes, exposure to many areas which enhances learning and deepens knowledge base
Yes, Church management and personal areas absent from seminary training
Yes, especially now that it is on-line
Yes, I believe the faculty were excellent teachers, particularly, Dr Phillip Disalvio. The teachers made "you think" and assigned appropriate homework assignments to the course curriculum. A good education received, money was well spent. (I was self-pay). Curriculum very interesting and personally challenging. Teachers were demanding but fair. Fantastic Program. I learned a lot.
Yes, course content was relevant to professional needs and well presented

Yes, it was encompassing and touched on all aspects of good administration and research skills preparing one for work world
Yes, faculty- Ms. Laubsch, LL Walker, Mrs. Lyons. Excellent professors. Applied real world to classroom experience.
Extremely knowledgeable
Yes, program content, knowledgeable faculty
Yes, because it was worthwhile and my friend and co-worker could learn a lot
Yes, quality of instruction
Yes, Good course curriculum, well balanced, good learning experience lot of help from other students who were working full time.
Perhaps, helped me begin my career in healthcare - taught me management skills and business culture
Yes, Great program
Yes, good school, faculty, program tailored to needs of student. Location, site, facilities
Yes, I was able to apply what I learned
Yes, because it broadened my world, I enjoyed the classes, interacting with faculty and fellow students and I have a graduate degree and no one can take that away from me.
Yes, it is rewarding and the faculty staff are outstanding and helpful at all stages
Yes, Core curriculum was good quality; this was a educational experience after many years out of school. I improved writing skills and applied class materials to my professional experience
Yes, Learned many new skills and techniques. Given much personal attention by Dr. Wish and department professors
Yes, masters degrees are important to the motivated professional. It is no longer an option. SHU a good program to prepare for the future
Yes, I know that much has changed and improved since my time in the program (10 years ago) I've been impressed with the evolution of the program since.
Yes, convenient, good networking opportunities, good faculties
No, probably not. At the time I completed the program, many of the topics in this survey did not apply- did not help me to change careers at all
Yes, good program
Yes, Excellent opportunity to advance one's skills and knowledge in his/her chosen field, as well as develop a professional network of colleagues that lasts a lifetime.

Table F. Recommendation of Degree - Further Comments

Yes, it is well suited to provide the education needed in the nonprofit arena
Yes, valuable and challenging learning experience- enjoyed interaction with students from other public service careers other than healthcare
Yes, quality of instructors, timely and relevant course material; ability to network with other public service professionals.
Yes, quality of faculty / programs, accreditation of program, wide range of concentration areas
Yes, overall good education and understanding
Yes, faculty is great, good location. I believe that public admin is a good career choice.
Yes, I was able to apply most of what I learned in the classroom to my profession
Yes, good faculty, cooperative staff, flexibility in class offering
Yes, I graduated from SHU. Excellent faculty. Very flexible. Challenging and expands your mind and greatly improves written skills
Yes, flexible, interesting program
Perhaps, depends on person's career goals. Only beneficial in public sector.
Yes, program very geared toward the working professional
Perhaps, need to diversify the program. Too heavy in the healthcare field
Yes, program is diverse. Faculty very knowledgeable
Yes, seton world wide prepared me for the future
Yes, greater career opportunities by having skills and widening perspective of job, organization and community
Yes, good program. Informative and useful. Enjoyed interacting with peers and their diverse backgrounds within healthcare

Table L: Comparison of Job, Job Status and Annual Salary

Current Job Situation	Comparison of Job, Job Status and Annual Salary		
	At time of entry in MPA program	Currently	Movement
	Total Sample	Total Sample	Total Sample
	Percent of Total	Percent of Total	Percent of Total
Current Job Situation			
Employed full-time	78	84	6
Employed full-time, but seeking a new position	16	15	(1)
Employed part-time by choice	4	8	4
Employed part-time, but seeking full-time employment	2	1	(1)
Unemployed, but not seeking employment	0	5	5
Attending school full-time and not employed	4	0	(4)
Attending school full-time and employed part time	10	0	(10)
Unknown	3	4	1
Total	117	117	0
	67%	72%	5%
	14%	13%	-1%
	3%	7%	3%
	2%	1%	-1%
	0%	4%	4%
	3%	0%	-3%
	9%	0%	-9%
	3%	3%	1%
	100%	100%	0%
Current Job in Organization Hierarchy			
Non-supervising professional	41	13	(28)
First-line supervisor/manager	34	23	(11)
Mid-level manager (Bureau Chief, Division Director)	17	34	17
Upper-level manager (Deputy Commissioner, VP)	5	18	13
Director/Commissioner/CEO	4	11	7
Other	15	17	2
Unknown	1	1	0
Total	117	117	0
	35%	11%	-24%
	28%	20%	-9%
	15%	29%	15%
	4%	15%	11%
	3%	8%	6%
	13%	15%	2%
	1%	1%	0%
	100%	100%	0%
Annual Salary			
Less than and including \$25,000	21	0	(21)
\$25,001-\$35,000	24	4	(20)
\$35,001-\$45,000	14	9	(5)
\$45,001-\$55,000	18	11	(7)
\$55,001-\$65,000	15	22	7
\$65,001-\$75,000	11	20	9
\$75,001-\$85,000	6	17	11
\$85,001-\$95,001	1	9	8
\$95,001 or more	2	18	16
Unknown	5	7	2
Total	117	117	0
	18%	0%	-18%
	21%	3%	-17%
	12%	8%	-4%
	15%	9%	-6%
	13%	19%	6%
	9%	17%	8%
	5%	15%	9%
	1%	8%	7%
	2%	15%	14%
	4%	6%	2%
	100%	100%	0%

Table M: Usefulness of Graduate Curriculum

How useful or important are the following knowledge / skills / values to your career?

Assessment Area	Mean	Mode	Median	Std	Skewness
Assessment of Graduate Curriculum					
Human Resource Management	3.41	4.00	4.00	0.84	-1.26
Managing the Budget and financial process	3.41	4.00	4.00	0.76	-1.09
Information Management	3.46	4.00	4.00	0.73	-1.37
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.32	4.00	3.00	0.79	-0.98
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.79	4.00	4.00	0.45	-2.07
Computer applications	3.28	4.00	3.00	0.82	-0.96
Budgeting skills	3.32	4.00	3.50	0.77	-0.75
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	3.19	4.00	3.00	0.88	-0.87
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	3.13	3.00	3.00	0.88	-0.81
Organizations and their behavior	3.55	4.00	4.00	0.67	-1.21
Improvement of Skills					
Oral skills	3.88	4.00	4.00	0.36	-2.88
Written skills	3.85	4.00	4.00	0.38	-2.46
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.83	4.00	4.00	0.42	-2.50
Research Skills	3.38	4.00	4.00	0.78	-1.13
Assessment of Values					
Serving one's professional organization	3.37	4.00	4.00	0.82	-1.07
Serving one's community	3.32	4.00	4.00	0.84	-0.76
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.16	4.00	3.00	0.92	-0.69
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.29	4.00	3.00	0.81	-0.79
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	2.97	4.00	3.00	0.92	-0.39
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.69	4.00	4.00	0.59	-2.07
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.69	4.00	4.00	0.60	-2.09
Working collaboratively	3.81	4.00	4.00	0.50	-3.06

Scale: 1 = not useful, 2 = somewhat useful, 3 = useful, 4 = very useful

Table O: Comparison of What is Useful vs. What was Learned - Healthcare and MHA Presented

	MHA																					
Working collaboratively	3.90	1	1	3.60																		
Oral skills	3.87	2	18	3.25																		
Written skills	3.87	3	9	3.42																		
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.77	4	8	3.47																		
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.73	5	6	3.49																		
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.71	6	4	3.53																		
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.71	7	2	3.55																		
Managing the Budget and financial process	3.48	8	17	3.27																		
Serving one's professional organization	3.46	9	15	3.28																		
Organizations and their behavior	3.45	10	3	3.55																		
Information Management	3.42	11	20	3.04																		
Research Skills	3.38	12	5	3.50																		
Human Resource Management	3.35	13	13	3.32																		
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.31	14	14	3.31																		
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.29	15	11	3.40																		
Budgeting skills	3.25	16	21	2.98																		
Computer applications	3.24	17	22	2.59																		
Serving one's community	3.17	18	16	3.28																		
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	3.14	19	12	3.35																		
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.08	20	10	3.42																		
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	3.06	21	7	3.48																		
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	2.94	22	19	3.04																		
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.92	1	4	3.75																		
Budgeting skills	3.92	2	15	3.33																		
Written skills	3.92	3	8	3.58																		
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.92	4	1	3.77																		
Oral skills	3.91	5	18	3.08																		
Managing the Budget and financial process	3.75	6	14	3.33																		
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.73	7	11	3.46																		
Working collaboratively	3.73	8	3	3.77																		
Information Management	3.67	9	20	2.92																		
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.67	10	12	3.42																		
Organizations and their behavior	3.67	11	5	3.75																		
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.64	12	2	3.77																		
Computer applications	3.50	13	22	2.73																		
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	3.33	14	13	3.42																		
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	3.33	15	7	3.58																		
Human Resource Management	3.25	16	21	2.91																		
Research Skills	3.17	17	10	3.46																		
Serving one's community	3.09	18	16	3.33																		
Serving one's professional organization	3.00	19	9	3.50																		
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.00	20	6	3.67																		
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.00	21	17	3.25																		
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	2.90	22	19	3.00																		

Table P. Comparison of What is Useful vs. What was Learned - Public Service and Nonprofit Presented

Public Service		Nonprofit		
	Mean	Count	Mean	
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.83	1	2	3.55
Oral skills	3.83	2	18	3.20
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.83	3	1	3.67
Written skills	3.77	4	11	3.37
Organizations and their behavior	3.67	5	4	3.48
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.66	6	9	3.40
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.66	7	13	3.33
Working collaboratively	3.66	8	5	3.47
Serving one's community	3.57	9	14	3.31
Human Resource Management	3.53	10	15	3.24
Research Skills	3.43	11	6	3.40
Information Management	3.41	12	19	3.14
Serving one's professional organization	3.40	13	7	3.40
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.38	14	8	3.40
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.37	15	3	3.48
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	3.34	16	16	3.24
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.28	17	12	3.37
Computer applications	3.27	18	22	2.69
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	3.21	19	20	3.14
Managing the Budget and financial process	3.13	20	10	3.38
Budgeting skills	3.10	21	17	3.21
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	3.03	22	21	3.13
Oral skills	4.00	1	21	2.73
Decision-making and Problem solving	3.93	2	5	3.53
Critical thinking / analytical skills	3.93	3	10	3.33
Written skills	3.86	4	20	2.87
Working effectively with people from diverse backgrounds	3.79	5	4	3.60
Working collaboratively	3.79	6	3	3.67
Abiding by ethical standards of behavior in one's profession	3.71	7	2	3.67
Human Resource Management	3.57	8	19	2.87
Serving one's community	3.57	9	6	3.53
Information Management	3.50	10	16	3.07
Budgeting skills	3.50	11	17	3.00
Managing the Budget and financial process	3.43	12	15	3.07
Organizations and their behavior	3.43	13	1	3.67
Focusing on quality of life and / or public policy issues, such as healthcare, affordable housing, safety and education	3.36	14	8	3.40
Assuming leadership positions in one's professional organization	3.36	15	12	3.27
Assuming leadership positions in one's community	3.29	16	13	3.20
Computer applications	3.21	17	22	2.60
Research Skills	3.21	18	11	3.33
Serving one's professional organization	3.14	19	14	3.13
Policy and Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation	3.07	20	7	3.47
Political / Legal Institutions and processes	2.79	21	18	3.00
Economic and Social Institutions and processes	2.79	22	9	3.33

Table O: Further Comments

1	Graduating- the MPA degree is not that applicable to my current situation because I work for profit companies.
2	I am a member of the Center For Public Service alumni group. I feel the networking and support of the members and staff has been very helpful for me.
3	Specifically for the Nonprofit concentration: Joint ventures with corporations or for profit ventures. Also in the fund develop. Category- Strategic Philanthropy and Venture Philanthropy. The above mentioned subjects/issues represent non traditional, "hybrid" approaches that new and future students should become familiar with.
4	The interaction with fellow students was very helpful. Discussions in class included real world experiences, not just academic theory. Adjunct staff from organization were very good for the most part.
5	My military experience was a requirement for my present position. The MPA program gave me a strong basis for understanding the organization and its political realities. I think it would be useful for students to have a stronger knowledge base in the legal realities of public agencies and NP sector organizations
6	MHA supplemented an existing MBA. - MHA online was unique in that the quality of students allowed growth through team interacting i.e., we learned through the experiences of our team. - online students sometimes require a little more secondary instruction in courses such as statistics. - Great experience, Great people
7	The emphasis on written communication as well as presenting ideas in front of large groups was the most important aspect of the program for me. It helped me become a better communicator and leader within my organization.
8	I think the core courses are critical in gaining a basic foundation of knowledge in organizations and how they operate. I find that daily I apply the analytical skills gained through research analysis as well as those skills developed relative to statistical and financial assessments as applied directly to policy making, long term planning decision making and reasonable allocation. As the court administration/criminal justice track no longer exists, I am unable to respond to areas for improvement. In general, the full time staff provided more in terms of direction and support than some of the part time staff, who had full time jobs elsewhere. Two enhancements: more off campus courses at community college centers and course access via off site video teleconferencing
9	More budgeting and finance skills
10	The professors in the program are committed to student success. I think more interaction between students/faculty on projects/research is needed. More career counseling/guidance is needed.
11	I don't think there was one class or subject matter that sticks out in my mind but the degree program as a whole challenged students and professionals to question their current practices and beliefs of the nonprofit world. The classwork, especially the research has helped me succeed in the often cut throat world of fundraising. It sharpened my critical thinking to remain one step ahead. But, most of all, I credit my success to Dr. Wish. I was fortunate enough to have her as a mentor and I still model my management style after the respectful and understanding environment that she created for me during my time at the Center For Public Service.
12	My only suggestion would be to consider changing the concentrations. I believe if the focus was on Finance, Marketing, H/R, etc. you would have a focused and more portable skills. These concentrations are similar regardless of where you work.
13	I found the MPA program to be extremely relevant to the work I was doing at the time I was enrolled. I would literally leave the classroom and apply those theories and concepts real time (yes, even economics) However, having elected to leave full time work in healthcare management less than a year after graduating, I cannot say the degree has furthered my career. The strongest aspects of the program were the healthcare management courses. the weakest being computer/info management and org theory.
14	I honestly believe that most of the information provided in my coursework will assist me in my future pursuits. Two suggestions I would make include dividing the computers and information course into two courses. Also, I would like to see more classroom speakers in all courses from the nonprofit, public and government sectors.
15	Having quality mentors is critical in making good career and educational decisions. The mentor needs to be diverse in their life experiences - education, travel, ethnicity, etc., I especially appreciated the guidance given to me by Dr. Disavio and Dr. Boutilier. I have, regrettably, not found reason to return to the SHU campus since graduation. I was not connected to the school body since lived off campus and did not have the time to participate in extra curriculum activities. I would love to be able to audit courses free of charge or for a nominal charge.
16	The MPA program assisted me more in my desire to develop an alternate career path- teaching. Current adjuncting at two colleges, I look forward to teaching regularly upon retirement. I would stress budgeting and budget maintenance program development. Oral skills are essential. Planning is an essential yet often overlooked component of policy and programming. I feel the computer applications for me were not good but I am sure that has been updated since I was an MPA student
17	At the time I graduated I think the program could have used more financial coursework. As with any graduate program, viewpoints from current professionals in the field are a big help. This will give the students a reality check. Some coursework on oral communication / public speaking would be a big help in preparing the students for the real world. Paying alumni a small stipend to complete a 26 page survey may increase responses. I am involved in a program at the Stillman School for student assessment and the small \$ shows me that they value my time. P.S. This includes postage.
18	Basic information and the knowledge of how to seek / research topics. Analytical thinking also very helpful

Table Q: Further Comments

19	Excellent real world applications, strong leadership training.
20	Most helpful: courses involving human resources / personnel management, organizational behavior, laws / policies, written communication skills and research skills were sharpened. Perhaps can be strengthened: guidance given during thesis process was quite limited- perhaps due to conflict of schedules between "mentor" and myself. More accessibility would be helpful.
21	I found the program extremely flexible to the point I received an MPA with 21 credit hours in municipal land use planning. The program accepted 6 credits from Rutgers and 3 from Seton Hall Law. This degree has provided me with unique qualifications that I have not encountered in other professional municipal employees.
22	Suggestions for improvement: 1) limit the group work for the on line program 2) Schedule a preparation / review class for the ACHE exam immediately following the MHA coursework. Otherwise, the program was terrific.
23	By far, for my experience, the management, budgeting and analytical thinking aspects of the program were of most importance. The computer programs were of least importance to me. In the business world there are so many different types and manufacturer's of software so the University would never be able to standardize all training. However, the standard presentation software appears to be Powerpoint and it would have been nice to be introduced to this software.
24	It would be helpful if there were greater opportunities for alumni networking and more career assistance.
25	In my particular case the MPA Program helped change my thinking mechanism to a more open ended problem solving system versus my previous static approach to situations. Courses that stressed real world problem solving were and are the most useful aspects of my experience in the program. Thank you for having such a fine program.
26	Most helpful were planning and SCAP. Areas that could use strengthening include statistical economic courses. Perhaps, make statistics a 2 part course. Also, the practicum experience was extremely poor due to lack of University-Agency communication and oversight. (It was really exploited). Overall, however, I really enjoyed the program and miss my studies and the experience they brought me.
27	For pre-service students, you need a more structured program to help them identify career opportunities. Maybe even a buddy system where you match up an inservice student with a preservice (who aspires to be what the inservice student currently is). I loved the program and credit it to much of my success to the people and things it exposed me to.
28	I really did like most of the instruction I received. I would really have preferred more emphasis on oral communication / public speaking. We are being groomed to be leaders-we should be well above average in speaking publicly. I would welcome the opportunity to become more involved with Seton Hall University and or the MPA Program.
29	Research and analytical skills. Computer application skills. Public relations and networking skills.
30	The aspects of the MPA program that I found most helpful were my increased oral communication skills, computer applications and critical thinking skills.
31	I believe the MPA program was strong overall, although I would have enjoyed a better selection of electives in criminal justice especially from a management perspective. I have recommended this program to many fellow professionals but most are more inclined to pursue the graduate program in education at SHU because it is fewer credits and it is less expensive. I think that many of them are making an error in judgement.
32	I began the program as an MPA student then later switched to MHA. However, after completing my internship I decided what area I wanted to concentrate on. That actually did not pan out and I ended up back in nonprofit which works for me very well. I found my MPA classes quite relative to what I am currently doing. The budgeting courses and the decision making course were beneficial to me as well as the career management course where I learned my role is more of a manager than a leader. This has taken me to greater heights knowing where I can fit in.
33	I believe the MPA program was a useful adjunct to my Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy. When I initially entered the program I was working in the hospital environment and was interested in pursuing a hospital management career. Although I chose to remain a hands on clinician and open my own private practice I still feel the knowledge that I gained in the MPA program to be extremely valuable. Thank you for sharing your expertise.
34	The MPA program not only provided me with professional growth and opportunity, but also personal satisfaction. This degree will prove to be very beneficial to me when I return to the workforce. It will afford me many more career opportunities than if I only had a BA. I view this program to be essential for an individual pursuing a public sector job. The only thing I wish I learned more was the Financial aspects of an org. ie. how to budget, interpret financial statements, make projections.

Table Q: Further Comments

35	As my survey indicates I found the program to be excellent for many reasons. First and foremost, is the commitment and excellence of the Director and full time faculty. They were outstanding. Appropriately demanding and examples of professionalism. Please exercise care in choosing adjunct professors. I had one or two disasters. Secondly, the networking opportunities with fellow classmates was also excellent. The caliber of students from all walks of professional life made for interesting class discussion and project work. Collaboration was emphasized and helped build commandiere. The coursework was relevant, thought provoking and challenging to the point of keeping you busy with occasional opportunities for overwhelmed if you did not pace yourself accordingly. While I sensed racial tensions possibly existed on the campus at the undergrad level, I never experienced anything in the MPA program except for observing disrespectful behavior towards a professor of Indian descent from a small number of students.
36	As always the professor makes the learning experience. In courses where profs were able to communicate the material and facilitate learning most effectively proved to be the most beneficial experiences. Unfortunately, my IT skills and financial management skills are not what I would like because I found these course inadequate in facilitating the classroom learning
37	Too many questions. Unreasonable to think a person should answer all of these, but I did. I thought that this was confidential
38	I think you should offer comprehensive tests instead of a thesis or, one or the other
39	In reality, the degree means nothing in the Archdiocese. I took the program because I enjoy learning. Was a very good program. I learned a lot. I do recommend it
40	Graduated in 1994. Now I receive an evaluation? Dr. Disalvio was the only excellent professor.
41	The only complaint that I had was that during one of my classes a professor made a comment towards me. He said that I would not receive an "A" in his class because I had no experience and I was too young to be in the program.
42	I was very impressed with the MPA program at Seton Hall especially the professors and coursework. Most helpful was the budget, planning, economics and healthcare courses. Computer programming / skills was a little weak. Overall very satisfied.
43	The program was invaluable in creating a knowledge base for me in business and healthcare. I knew little of each when I came to SHU. I wasn't thrilled with the internship program (I found my own). I also haven't really gotten much out of career services
44	I especially appreciated having other professionals in my class. This enabled me to learn from them as well as the professor
45	In addition to improving my oral, written and computer skills, I also learned many techniques of staff management, budget preparation and statistical analysis. I learned to budget my time, complete projects successfully and network with my colleagues in the nonprofit area. Dr. Wish and her department colleagues - faculty and staff alike were accessible to me at all times and provided excellent coaching and guidance to me. I thank everyone in the Center For Public Service for the valuable education I received while at SHU
46	Having faculty involved in NJ healthcare and policy was extremely helpful. Networking opportunities were exceptional, pace of program was appropriate for part time students
47	My responses to the technology questions are based on the fact that technology was not that advanced 1993. The University did not have many computer labs, nor was it really necessary to use them. My responses to the research seminar are based on my experience attempting to complete a thesis. The department has since changed this requirement to the research seminar (2 different types of experience).
48	There is no doubt that the skills and education help me on a day to day basis with fulfilling my tasks and life ambition. I do recommend this program to others. There is a sincere attempt at Seton Hall to provide a quality education. My instructors all worked hard and did their very best to provide us with as much knowledge as we could absorb. I am not sorry I completed this degree. I am proud of it.
49	Financial and organizational management were very helpful as well as economics. Human resource management was not that helpful. There should be less focus on job descriptions and evaluations and more on legal/regulatory issues, such as FMLA, EEO, OSHA, Do's and Don'ts of interviewing. More emphasis should be placed on ethics courses. I would have found additional elective courses more beneficial than the research project.
50	Seton Hall's MPA program has the best reputation in NJ. If they offered a PHD program I would go back in a heartbeat. Only suggestion is to make sure courses keep up with real world and progress in public service administration
51	The Center For Public Service prepared me very well for my career, overall. I would have liked more focus on NJ Local Gov't and issues of concern to them. The focus was often healthcare related and healthcare issues.
52	More on Budgeting and government (State, Local and Federal)
53	My love for this profession grows each day. I had a good experience in the MPA program (with the exception of a couple courses that I hated). There were a few exceptional professors while I was in the program - most were good but a few stand out in my mind as having been very knowledgeable and personable. I wish more of the public policy courses had been available when I was enrolled (some were cancelled due to low enrollment). I am grateful for having the opportunity to attend Seton Hall.

Table Q: Further Comments

54	What I found most helpful was the course in financial management, leadership institute and capstone thesis. I think the program should have more financial management courses to better prepare students in the future.
55	As an employee in a nonprofit agency the professionals teaching the non profit courses were excellent. Courses such as grant writing, understanding board strategies, volunteerism were excellent. So were classes dealing with personnel management and organizational management. Budget strategies and financial management courses helped me better plan my budgets and provided necessary information for fund raising and entertaining thought about developing a capital campaign.
56	Financial courses in SHU could be longer, too much material to absorb. Writing assignments were very useful. Faculty- Excellent
57	Capstone project concerning team building. Organization theory. MIS needs more practical experience. Personnel management employee evaluations
58	The computer skills for older students - these are critical that these students need to learn

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