



Program Name & Location

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Pullman, WA

Dates of the Site Visit

October 19-21, 2011

Accreditation: 7 year CAHME Accreditation, effective 2011 through 2018

Accreditation History

Season	Year	Action
Spring	1997	Site Visit
Fall	1998	Program withdrew application for accreditation
		Appointed advisor and will resubmit application for accreditation
Fall	1999	Site Visit
Spring	2000*	Accreditation; 1st year PR in Spring , 3rd year PR in Spring 2003, tentative date for SV Spring 2004
Spring	2001	1st year Progress Report Accepted with commendation for progress
2005		Site Visit date moved up with one year from Spring 2004 to Spring
Spring	2003	3 Year Progress Report Accepted
Fall	2005	*Reaccreditation Granted – 6 years
Fall	2006	1st Year Progress Report accepted
Fall	2007	2nd Year Progress Report accepted

Program Description

The Graduate Program in Health Policy and Administration (HPA) was established (became operational) in 1994, with the first student graduating in the Spring semester of 1996, followed by a second graduating cohort of two students in the Summer semester of 1996. The HPA Department was founded in 2001 and was the first academic Department “established and centered” at a WSU urban campus, as well as the first new Department at Washington State University since the establishment of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics in 1990. HPA’s mission is: “to offer a world-class graduate education to the next generation of health administrators, policy analysts, and health services researchers; and to generate new knowledge and competencies that improve access, quality, efficiency, and equity of health services, both domestically and internationally.”

The HPA Graduate Program offers an accredited Master of Science in Health Policy and Administration (MHPA) degree. The Program was first accredited by CAMHE in 2000, and reaccredited in 2005. WSU MHPA students must complete a total of 50 semester hours. This includes 39 credits of introductory, core, and capstone courses; 5 credits of electives; 3 credits of



internship; and 3 credits for a graduate project or 5 credits for a thesis. Each student's graduate project or thesis requires a faculty committee of three, with an HPA member as chair.

The MHPA Program attracts a diverse group of entry-level and mid-career students from the region, nation, and world. It is the only CAHME-accredited degree Program admitted to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP).¹

WSU MHPA graduates find jobs in various parts of the healthcare system:

- Providers: leadership roles in hospitals, physician group practices, nursing homes, and home health agencies
- Payers: insurance companies and HMOs
- Suppliers: pharmaceutical companies and consulting firms
- Public sector: state health departments and federal programs
- Professional Programs: admission to nationally ranked medical schools, law schools, and doctoral Programs

HPA faculty and students serve the residents of metropolitan Spokane, eastern Washington, and the Inland Northwest region through various outreach and engagement activities consistent with WSU's land grant mission. This includes working with providers, consumers, advocates, and administrators to address health system quality, cost, access, and patient autonomy.

Findings

CAHME sends a team on-site to review the program. On the first day, the CAHME Fellow reviews the records and resources of the Program. On days two and three, the full team completes an extensive evaluation of the Program based on CAHME requirements. These findings are reported, and programs are designated as being a leader in meeting the requirement (a "strength"), meeting the requirement; partially meeting the requirements, or not meeting the requirement. Sometimes, a program may "meet" a requirement, but the site visitors suggest a recommendation for the program to improve ("Consultative Recommendations").

Programs need to report to CAHME following their site visit their remediation activity for all requirements that are not "Met" in a "Progress Report". Thus, evaluating a program based on "Not Mets" or "Partially Mets" may not reflect the progress a program has made since their last site visit. Programs have two years to complete all criteria found partially or not met on their site visit report. Accreditation past two years indicates that the program has successfully completed progress reporting.

¹ According to WICHE, "WRGP consists of very high quality masters and doctoral degree programs which tend not to be widely available throughout the West." The 15 participating states are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

		Number	Percent
Met	Strengths	4	11%
	Other Met	23	66%
Partially Met		8	23%
Not Met		0	0%
Total		35	100%
<i>Consultative Recommendations</i>		<i>12</i>	<i>34%</i>

Program Strengths

I.B.1

The program staff’s organizational skills, attention to details, and level of commitment are a strength of the program.

III.B.15

The content integration and experiential learning in the sequence of two finance courses is a strength of the program.

III.C.5

The program’s level of support from the community and extensive network of stakeholders is a strength of the program.

IV.D.1

The faculty’s extensive and high quality scholarship as demonstrated in extramural research support and dissemination through publications and high profile conferences is a strength of the program.

Partially Mets

I.B.1 THE PROGRAM WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT ITS MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CAN BE ACHIEVED.

Assessment:

The Program is currently housed in the Business School, and depends upon the School to share staff resources, the Dean's secretary and a marketing administrator specifically. The Program lacks dedicated administrative resources to support marketing, admissions, Graduate Assistantships, fellowships, and job placement functions. The program is supported by three fulltime faculty lines, each of whom teaches a 4/4 semester load and performs almost all of these other administrative responsibilities, which leaves little room for research functions or Program growth.

Criterion Related Concern:

The Program lacks sufficient financial and administrative support to ensure that its mission can be fulfilled and sustained.



Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program must obtain additional staff and faculty resources to ensure the Program can support marketing, admissions, Graduate Assistantships, fellowships, and job placement functions.

II.A.4 THE PROGRAM WILL INVOLVE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND PRACTITIONERS IN APPROPRIATE AREAS OF PROGRAM DECISION-MAKING AND EVALUATION.

Assessment:

The Program's interactions with internal and external stakeholders are characterized by a number of informal or ad hoc processes and/or meetings to involve them in Program decision-making and evaluation. Further, meeting with students and Program leadership suggests that students are only involved in course evaluations.

Criterion Related Concern:

There is a lack of evidence of a formalized process for involving students, alumni, and practitioners in appropriate areas of Program decision-making and evaluation. Alumni and practitioners are not systematically or routinely involved in appropriate areas of program decision-making and evaluation, such as strategic planning, review of the competency model, curriculum development, and quality improvement efforts. Likewise, students are not formally engaged in admissions, faculty meetings, strategic planning, or quality improvement efforts.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program must formalize and document the process for involving students, alumni, and practitioners in appropriate areas of Program decision-making and evaluation, such as: admissions, faculty meetings, strategic planning, competency assessment, and curriculum development.

III.A.4 THE PROGRAM CURRICULUM WILL DEVELOP STUDENTS' CORE COMPETENCIES

Assessment:

The Program incorporates into its curricular content a number of competency-based cases and scenarios designed to address higher level learning and assessment methods. However, in the areas of critical thinking and analysis, the Program must seek to enhance and extend course material, particularly in the areas of financial management, quantitative reasoning, and problemsolving congruent with higher levels of learning in associated content areas. In addition, there was insufficient evidence to suggest that capstone course projects resulted in comprehensive skills assessments in the areas of critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving aligned with graduatelevel competency attainment.

Criterion Related Concern:

The Program curriculum lacks sufficient rigor to adequately develop students' competencies in critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving.



Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program shall focus on curricular enhancements designed to further develop students' competencies in critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving, particularly with regard to students' ability to apply such concepts to broadly-based scenarios (e.g., strategy, finance, and capstone).

III.B.4 THE PROGRAM CURRICULUM WILL INCLUDE INTEGRATIVE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING FIELD-BASED APPLICATIONS THAT REQUIRE STUDENTS TO DRAW UPON, APPLY AND SYNTHESIZE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS COVERED THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM OF STUDY.

Assessment:

Interviews with Program faculty revealed that while the Program seeks to offer integrative activities, particularly in the marketing, strategy, and capstone courses, the current learning initiatives in these courses draw upon and apply only limited material from the program of study. In addition, these field-based and integrative activities assess only a small number of student competencies, associated with specific course objectives. Out of 24 Program competencies, only 13 competencies are evaluated through the preceptors' assessments of the field experience, the faculty assessment of performance in the Health Care Marketing, Strategic Management, and Capstone courses, and the faculty assessment of student performance in team-based case study and presentation.

Criterion Related Concern:

While the Program seeks to incorporate integrative experiences, including field-based applications, that require students to draw upon, apply, and synthesize knowledge and skills covered throughout the program of study, the current integrative activities are not sufficient in scope, rigor, or depth to demonstrate the student's ability to draw upon and apply material from throughout the program of study. For example, the integrative experience in the capstone course often was found to involve a descriptive report of a project with little analysis, synthesis, or evaluation by the student. Moreover, the integrative experiences in these courses, including the capstone course, only addressed a limited number of program competencies. There is no culminating experience or integrative activity that can be used to assess most if not all program competencies.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program must enhance integrative experiences and field-based applications to include requiring the incorporation of a culminating experience that draws upon a wide range of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the program of study and assesses most, if not all, of the program competencies, as stated in the competency model.

III.C.1 THE PROGRAM WILL INCORPORATE A RANGE OF ASSESSMENT METHODS DRIVEN BY ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES. THE METHODS WILL BE BASED ON HIGHER EDUCATION TAXONOMIC LEVELS APPROPRIATE TO GRADUATE EDUCATION AND ALIGNED WITH DEFINED COMPETENCIES.



Assessment:

A review of course syllabi and deliverables followed by interviews with Program faculty revealed the use of lower-level assessment methods aligned with lower-level skills attainment in some of the more advanced courses.

Criterion Related Concern:

In more advanced courses such as finance, marketing and the capstone, assessment methods were found to not be driven by adult learning principles based on higher education taxonomic levels appropriate to graduate education and aligned with defined competencies. Examples include the use of multiple choice and short answer testing methods and reports rather than analysis and synthesis in course and field-based projects.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program shall develop and implement assessment tools that demonstrate students' ability to analyze and synthesize course content and learning from field based projects in more advanced courses.

III.C.3 THE PROGRAM WILL REGULARLY EVALUATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS AND GRADUATES ATTAIN THE COMPETENCIES AND USE THE EVALUATION FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Assessment:

A review of Program meeting minutes (faculty, strategy) and interviews with faculty revealed that the Program has engaged in a process of reviewing competency attainment for 13 of its 24 stated competencies. Further, the 13 competencies are assessed at the course and Program levels, but not at the individual student level. Finally graduates are being assessed using a business school tool which does not assess the attainment of Program competencies and their input regarding the competencies is not obtained and used for continuous improvement.

Criterion Related Concern:

The Program lacks a process that regularly evaluates the extent to which students and graduates attain all 24 of the stated competencies at the Program and individual student levels, and uses such an evaluation for continuous improvement.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program must extend and enhance the process by which it evaluates students' progress toward the mastery of all 24 stated competencies at the Program and individual student levels. The Program must also demonstrate the use of student and graduate assessments for related continuous improvement purposes.

IV.A.1 PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP WILL ENSURE THAT THE COMPLEMENT, INVOLVEMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS OF PROGRAM FACULTY ARE SUFFICIENT TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION OF THE PROGRAM.

Assessment:



While CAHME prescribes three full-time faculty as a minimum core Program requirement, interviews with Program faculty, the Dean, and Vice Provost indicate that the Business School and University place additional burdens on Program faculty such that a normal semester teaching load is 4/4. Program faculty are required to teach into other graduate and/or undergraduate programs in addition to providing teaching, administrative and advising/mentoring support for the MHA Program. Additionally, Program faculty support the Business School with additional student advising at a rate greater than 30 students per faculty member.

Criterion Related Concern:

The Program has an insufficient complement of core Program faculty to accomplish its mission based on the teaching workload relative to the number of full-time faculty responsible for Program implementation.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program must secure from University leadership the provision of additional core faculty, or additional resources or a reduction in workload in order to assure a complement of faculty necessary to accomplish the Program's mission and to sustain the Program into the future.

IV.B.2 THE PROGRAM WILL ENSURE THAT THERE IS A SYSTEMATIC PLAN FOR, AND INVESTMENT IN, INDIVIDUAL FACULTY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP.

Assessment:

Discussions regarding the use of research for the purpose of tenure and promotion with Program faculty, the Dean of Research, the Business School Dean, and the Vice Provost indicate a low standard of research productivity exists across the University. While Business School policy indicates a level of research productivity at approximately 20% of effort, faculty are promoted largely on the basis of years of service relative to teaching. Evidence suggests the lack of a written, formalized, or systematic plan to invest in faculty research. To underscore this point, research productivity/development is not included in the Program's list of strategic goals and objectives.

Criterion Related Concern:

The Program does not have a systematic plan for individual faculty research and scholarship.

Criterion Related Recommendation:

The Program shall develop and employ a systematic plan for individual faculty research and scholarship.

Consultative Recommendations

I.A.2 THE PROGRAM WILL ESTABLISH GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES THAT ARE ACTION-BASED, OBSERVABLE, AND MEASURABLE.

Assessment:



A review of the current objectives show that many of these are more process focused versus outcomes focused. it may be difficult to ascertain if goals are actually being met.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should consider adding more outcomes based objectives and consider stretch goals to further drive quality improvement in research, teaching and service.

II.A.1 THE PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE FULL AND ACCURATE INFORMATION REGARDING ITS CURRICULUM, THE COMPETENCIES THAT FORM THE BASIS FOR ITS CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS, AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS, AND MAKE GENERAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC, EMPLOYERS, PRECEPTORS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.

Assessment:

A review of the program website revealed information that did not reflect the current status of the program.

Consultative Recommendation: The program should ensure that all program information on the university's website is up-to-date.

II.A.5 THE PROGRAM WILL INVOLVE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND PRACTITIONERS IN APPROPRIATE AREAS OF PROGRAM DECISION-MAKING AND EVALUATION.

Assessment:

A review of curriculum committee minutes did not show evidence that alumni and students had been given opportunities to provide input to the program decision-making and evaluation on a regular basis.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should consider increasing the level of student or alumni involvement in the program's Curriculum Committee.

III.A.1 THE PROGRAM WILL ADOPT A SET OF COMPETENCIES AS THE BASIS OF ITS CURRICULUM AND LINK COURSE CONTENT AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO THE COMPETENCIES.

Assessment:

A review of the curriculum showed most of the classes having learning objectives mapped to an unusually large number of course competencies. this may result in courses not being able to focus specifically enough on developing the competencies they were intended to develop.

Consultative Recommendation:



The program should consider alternative approaches to mapping curriculum competencies to course learning objectives so that instructors focus more specialized courses in the curriculum to a more limited and finely focused subset of the program's set of competencies.

III.A.2 THE PROGRAM WILL STRUCTURE ITS CURRICULUM SO THAT STUDENTS ACHIEVE LEVELS OF COMPETENCY APPROPRIATE TO GRADUATE EDUCATION.

Assessment:

A review of the methodology the Program used to map course content and learning objectives to competencies showed the Program did not use Bloom's Taxonomy properly. This potentially caused confusion for both professors and students as to the level of competency classes needed to attain. The verbs used in the 60 SLU competency statements were intentional and already reflected, a priori, a particular level of learning in either Bloom's cognitive or affective domain. The program's re-positioning of these competencies as higher than reflected in the verbs used in the competency statements is not logical.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should re-examine its use of Bloom's Taxonomy as a scale, in light of the intentional verbs used in the 60 competencies that are the basis for the program's curriculum. The scale used in assessment of student attainment of competencies, such as the one used in the self-assessment survey, should be consistent to allow for both longitudinal tracking over two or more years and for triangulation across assessment efforts, time and different raters.

III.A.4 THE PROGRAM WILL EVALUATE COURSE INSTRUCTION AND THE CURRICULUM AND USE THE RESULTS TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC PLANS FOR MAINTAINING OR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Assessment:

While course evaluations and surveys were used to improve the curriculum, this was not accomplished in a formal way. Without a formalized process, it may be possible for feedback useful to improve the program to be missed. The program's use of course evaluation data, student and alumni feedback and other valuable inputs to quality improvement for the curriculum should be more intentional.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should consider formalizing the process of utilizing course evaluations, student, alumni and employer survey results to maintain and improve the quality of the curriculum and instruction.

III.A.5 THE PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES AT APPROPRIATE POINTS IN THE CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF AND TO INTERACT WITH PROFESSIONALS ACROSS THE BROAD RANGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS.



Assessment:

Until the new medical school begins operations on the Spokane Campus there are limited opportunities for interaction with a broader range of health professionals.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should plan for specific places in the curriculum where students are educated alongside, interact with, or are exposed to other health professions students or practitioners.

III.B.19 THE PROGRAM CURRICULUM SHOULD ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT CONTENT AREAS, AND IS NOT NECESSARILY COURSE-SPECIFIC, BUT RATHER CONTENT THAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT SOMEWHERE IN THE PROGRAM: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

Assessment:

Although students are exposed to professional skills development towards the end their degree program there was no evidence that they were participating in professional skills development during the first year of their program.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should consider strategically positioning professional skills development content in the first year of the curriculum.

III.C.3 THE PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE, THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULUM, OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN TEAM-BASED ACTIVITIES.

Assessment:

A review of the syllabi did show opportunities for team-based learning, but some of these opportunities also gave students the option of individual projects in place of team-based projects. Additionally, it did not appear that the program leadership and faculty were necessarily aware of where and when students do have opportunities to work in teams in individual courses and across the curriculum. Coordination throughout the curriculum is suggested.

Consultative Recommendation:

While the program clearly has opportunities for team-based learning activities in multiple courses, the program's leadership and faculty should plan, monitor and review the extent to which teambased learning and other group activities are utilized throughout the program.

IV.A.2. THE PROGRAM WILL FOSTER A DIVERSE CULTURE WITHIN THE FACULTY AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Assessment:

Since the core Program faculty does not include any females, the Program must actively plan to utilize its extensive and diverse network of professionals and alumni in the classroom and other



Program activities. It is important for both the females and males in the Program to be exposed to and learn from strong female role models in and outside of the classroom.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should draw upon its strong and extensive network in the community to engage more female leaders in the areas of health services and policy to participate in the program as adjunct faculty, guest lecturers, site visit hosts, preceptors, advisers, and mentors.

IV.C.1 THE PROGRAM FACULTY WILL INCORPORATE A RANGE OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS ALIGNED WITH THE PROGRAM'S DEFINED COMPETENCIES.

Assessment:

During discussions with faculty about the courses, it was clear that the great majority of faculty are incorporating higher level teaching and learning methods into their classrooms. However, many of the course syllabi neither describe the teaching and learning approaches and methods used nor go into enough detail about how time is spent in class. The faculty's mapping of competencies, to this point, has not included inventorying teaching and learning methods or student assessment methods.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should raise awareness among the teaching faculty of the necessity to move toward higher-level teaching and learning methods and student assessment methods as the program continues its journey toward implementation of competency-based education.

IV.C.2 THE PROGRAM WILL ENSURE THAT THERE IS A SYSTEMATIC PLAN FOR, AND INVESTMENT IN, INDIVIDUAL FACULTY CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN BOTH TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP.

Assessment:

While the Program does assign mentors to new faculty, there is no formal systematic process in place to ensure new faculty, especially adjunct faculty, are oriented to competency-based education, teaching and learning methods, and student assessment methods, specifically, or provided with mentoring or guidance about constructing course syllabi and preparing a new course more generally.

Consultative Recommendation:

The program should ensure new faculty are systematically oriented to competency-based education, the menu of teaching and learning methods and the menu of student assessment methods; and that they have the skills to development course syllabi, course learning objectives, session-by-session objectives and topics, and engage the students in experiential learning.