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Laurence Kranich, Chair of Graduate Academic Council (GAC)  
Reed Hoyt, Chair of University Planning and Policy Council (UPC)

From: David Andersen, Chair of Public Administration and Policy

Subject: Proposed Suspension of Admission to MAPAP

Date: December 18, 2008

During the summer and fall of 2008, the department of Public Administration and Policy, working in conjunction with the University-wide public policy faculty, crafted a proposal to combine the current Master of Arts in Public Affairs and Policy (MAPAP) Program within the MPA program. The proposal itself containing (1) background and rationale, (2) a summary of the features of the redesigned masters program, (3) a discussion of transitional issues to support current students in the pipeline, and (4) a list of required actions to make the proposal happen is attached to this memo. This proposal has gone through the following steps of faculty-led deliberation and discussion:

**Summer 2008:** Original proposal discussed and developed within department of Public Administration and Policy.

**August 7, 2008:** Resolution in principle to move forward passed by department of Public Administration and Policy with further refinements recommended to departmental design committee. During this process, the department made several amendments to the original proposal and directed a drafting committee to move toward a formal resolution.

**September 24, 2008:** Formal proposal to combine programs (see attachment) accepted by department of Public Administration and Policy with recommendation to refer discussion to the Public Policy faculty for discussion and comment. The MAPAP program is administered by the department of Public Administration and Policy, but many of the substantive concentrations and specific courses in the degree program are offered in conjunction with the Public Policy faculty and this degree is cross-listed and offered in combination with multiple other degree programs on campus.

**October 29, 2008:** The University-wide public policy faculty, a body of faculty drawn from departments across the University, all of whom contributes to the MAPAP program met to discuss the draft proposal.

This University-wide body of faculty expressed a number of procedural and substantive concerns that are now being addressed. Specifically, the public policy faculty was concerned that all of the many linkages between the MAPAP program and other programs and classes on campus be carefully addressed and changed before any formal action is taken to terminate the program. A list of major senate resolutions that we now believe will be necessary to smoothly transition into the new program is attached to this memo.

Finally, I have attached to this memo a draft of a possible Senate resolution that might be the first of several Senate resolutions needed to make this transition happen as smoothly as possible. I have modeled this resolution after a similar motion to suspend admissions to the Ph.D. in Organizational Studies in December of 2006.

With this memo, I request that you forward this information to the appropriate Senate committees for comment and action.

Attachments:

1. Proposal to Combine Current MAPAP Program within the MPA Program
2. Draft of future possible Senate Motions to implement proposal.
3. Draft of possible Senate Resolution to Suspend Admissions to MAPAP program.

## **Attachment 1: Proposal to Combine Current MAPAP Program within the MPA Program**

**Background and Rationale.** The University at Albany presently maintains two very similar masters programs in the broad area of public administration and policy. The Master of Arts in Public Affairs and Policy (MAPAP) has a focus on substantive policy areas, allowing students to major in policy areas such as Health, Environmental, or Education policy drawing on the strength of faculty located across the campus. The MPA has a primary focus on principles and practices of public management with concentrations in areas such as public finance and budgeting or human resources administration. However, in practice there is considerable overlap between the two programs. Indeed, the existence of “self-designed specializations” within each program allows students in either program to select an area of concentration drawn from the other degree. While the programs do share a majority of their common courses there are several core courses that currently distinguish their respective core curriculums.

Over the summer and fall of 2008 the faculty of the Department of Public Administration and Policy considered a number of options for changing, combining, or re-structuring these two masters programs so as to offer the strengths of both to all students; and to insure that all graduates from the University at Albany receive their degrees from a nationally ranked and accredited program.<sup>1</sup> The department decided that the best pathway forward would be to combine the current MAPAP program within the MPA program, creating a single masters degree program that will have the major strengths of both. We envision that this redesigned program will be attractive to students who would presently apply to either program and will continue to draw on the strengths of the public policy faculty across campus. In addition, a combined program would be more efficient to administer and would provide all students with a stronger, nationally ranked, and accredited masters education.

### **Features of the Redesigned Masters Program include:**

- 1) All advanced (post core) management and policy sequences currently offered in either the MAPAP or MPA will be available to all students in the redesigned MPA program.
- 2) A single set of nationally accredited core classes will support the single masters program.
- 3) The joint BA/MA program will be re-aligned with the revised single masters program within the existing joint BA/MPA program.
- 4) Joint masters, such as MSW/MA and History/MA, will be re-aligned with the revised single masters program.
- 5) All masters students in our department, as well as those students seeking joint or combined degrees, will receive a nationally accredited degree.

### **Transitional Issues to Support Current Students in the Pipeline:**

- 1) Using current advising flexibility, such as “self-designed specializations”, all advanced (post core) sequences offered in either the MAPAP or the MPA can be taken in either degree. This implies that policy sequences can “count” toward the MPA and that management and administration sequences can be applied to the degree programs of current MAPAP students.

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<sup>1</sup> At present, only the MPA degree is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and this is the degree that is nationally ranked by U.S. News and World Report.

- 2) With the consent of their advisors and the Director of the MAPAP program, students seeking the MAPAP degree may configure the masters essay requirement to be an applied policy exercise. The Director of the MAPAP program will work expeditiously to put in place mechanisms to support this resolution.
- 3) The Department of Public Administration and Policy will petition University Governance to suspend new admission to the MAPAP program. Halting admissions will insure that a minimal number of students are impacted by this change process.
- 4) The Directors of our Masters Degree programs will provide maximum flexibility possible to all students who wish to design their programs to take advantage of these new directions. Innovation is encouraged. Students working with their advisors and the degree program Directors are encouraged to seek new ways to combine advanced specializations, create an applied capstone exercise, and swap or waive existing core requirements. However, such flexibility must be limited to the existing waiver discretion granted by the GAC and must respect NASPAA guidelines for accredited masters programs.
- 5) We have already revised our advertising and recruiting materials so as to reflect “truth in advertising” for current and prospective applicants.
- 6) These changes have been well-received, in general, by the current entering class of both MPA and MAPAP students.
- 7) These changes are in the process of being described to potential applicants and, with several exceptions, students are OK with applying to the single degree program.

#### **Required Actions to Make this Happen:**

- 1) This proposal needs to be discussed with the public policy faculty, and receive their comments, suggestions, and input.
- 2) This proposal needs to be discussed with programs that partner in joint BA/masters programs with Rockefeller College masters programs, to receive their comments, suggestions, and input.
- 3) This proposal needs to be discussed with UAlbany programs that partner in combined masters programs with Rockefeller College masters programs, to receive their comments, suggestions, and input.
- 4) This proposal will be discussed with Albany Law School (joint MA-JD program).
- 5) The Graduate Academic Council and University Planning & Policy Council of the Senate would receive a proposal to discontinue future offering of the MAPAP. This motion would then move to the full Senate.
- 6) Formal proposals for all involved BA/MA and joint masters programs would have to be presented to GAC.
- 7) Off-Campus action as appropriate would be taken with SUNY-Central and the State Education Department.
- 8) Any potential formal changes to the MPA would be pursued separately from and subsequently to the formal dissolution of the MAPAP.

## **Attachment 2: Draft of future possible Senate Motions to implement proposal.**

1. Resolution to Suspend Admissions to the MAPAP (This resolution)
2. Resolution to Modify the structure of the MPA
  - i. Harmonize Expanded MPA with existing MAPAP
  - ii. Addition of a fifth specialization “Substantive Public Policy Areas”
  - iii. References to forthcoming resolutions as necessary
3. Resolution to create a BA in History/Master of Public Administration and discontinue the current BA in History/Master of Public Affairs and Policy
4. Resolution to create a Master of Public Administration/Master of Social Work and discontinue the current Master of Public Affairs and Policy/Master of Social Work
5. Resolution to create a Master of Public Administration/Master of History and discontinue the current Master of Public Affairs and Policy/Master of History

**UNIVERSITY SENATE**  
**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**  
**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: Graduate Academic Council and University Planning and Policy Council

Date: December 18, 2008

**PROPOSED SUSPENSION OF ADMISSIONS TO THE  
MASTER OF ARTS IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND POLICY PROGRAM**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That admission to the Masters of Arts in Public Affairs and Policy be suspended.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.
3. That this take effect upon the President's approval.

**Rationale:**

The GAC and UPC approve the proposed suspension of admission to this program for the reasons stated in Professor Andersen's attached memorandum.