**Northern Michigan University**

**OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Academic Departments**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Department or Unit</th>
<th>Department Name- Political Science and Public Administration</th>
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<td>Graduate Report</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date Submitted</th>
<th>REPORT for July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010</th>
<th>October 15, 2010</th>
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**Submitted by (Unit Representative)**

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<th>Brian D. Cherry, Department Head</th>
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**University Mission Statement**

Northern Michigan University challenges its students and employees to think independently and critically, develop lifelong learning habits, acquire career skills, embrace diversity and become productive citizens in the regional and global community.

**Department Mission Statement**

Department Mission:

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration through its curriculum fosters critical thinking of politics, public service, and public policy. Students will gain knowledge of common political and public administration terms, theory, and application through lectures, research, reading, presentations, active learning opportunities, and internships.

**Intended Objective #1**

1. Students should be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of common public administration terms and theories.

**Means of Assessment for Objective**

1a. Portfolio Assessment or Written Exams
1b. Capstone Exam
1c. Oral Exam

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected**

1a. All 11 students pass the capstone exam. Grades ranged from 92 to 100%. This was an improvement over the last two years.

1b. We are still in the process of switching from the written

**Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s)**

The department is getting better at clarifying expectations to the students. We believe moving to the portfolio has been a huge improvement and helped us meet our learning objectives.
exams to the portfolios. Four student submitted portfolio’s during this time period. Three passed on the first attempt. The Fourth passed after rewriting their quantitative paper.

1c. We had nine people take written exams during this time period. Three did not pass Part 1 of the written exam. All three of these individuals took the capstone exam the previous year and struggled. None have resubmitted.

We had one person retake their oral exam from the previous year and did not pass a second time. The student was factually wrong on material and did not appear to have prepared for the exam.

The department will continue to improve communication with the students regarding program and course requirements. Some of this comes down to integrating individual courses better into the portfolio requirements.

All students who struggled with the written or oral exams tended to lack relevant work experience. And were unable to tie theory with practice, which is a major goal of any MPA program.

The department is pushing harder for student to obtain relevant internship experience if they lack appropriate background. Also course development such as the PS Lecture Series allows students to meet with professionals and discuss practical application of material.

### Intended Objective #2

**Means of Assessment for Objective**

- 2a. Internship Evaluations
- 2b. Internship Reflection Papers
- 2c. Portfolio Assessment

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected**

- 2a. We had 5 students participate in internships during this time period. 2 received incomplete grades. Of the 3 that completed their internships all received high marks on their evaluations completed by the internship supervisor at the internship site.
- 2b. All students who completed their internship wrote reflection papers that demonstrated application of course material.
- 2c. Students not required to complete an internship because of current or previous career related experience provided a resume and work experience paper that reflected on the relationship with what they learned in the program.

**Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s).**

As previously stated, a major goal of any MPA program is to ensure students can demonstrate understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. Dr. Steve Nelson is taking over as internship coordinator and is developing a better monitoring and assessment system. This will help with documentation of stated goals.

### Intended Objective #3

**Means of Assessment for Objective**

- 3a. Capstone Paper/ Written Exam
- 3b. Portfolio Assessment
- 3c. Oral Exam

**Summary of Assessment Data Collected**

**Use of Results to Improve Department Program(s).**
| 3a. Capstone Paper/ Written Exam, 3b. Portfolio Assessment, and 3c. Oral Exam, are all designed to measure objective 3. The intent is to have the student both in writing and orally demonstrate a level of depth of understanding the material that enables them draw relationships and explain how material from individual courses works together to address policy concerns. Using data listed above with regards to the number of students who passed and failed either the written or oral exam we can see our success rate. (See Summary of Assessment Data Collected 1) |
| The department is making an effort to get away from the paper and presentation as the primary method of evaluating students. We are finding with the pre-service students are not making the relationship between theory and practice as well as the in-service students. Paper and pencil examinations, experiential assignments, journals, and internships are being emphasized to address this concern. We also believe the use of the portfolio will also help as both the faculty and students become involved in the process. |