

Program Suspension Proposal: Bachelor of Arts in Public Management

The University of Maine undertook a wide review of its degree programs in 2009-2010. President Kennedy formed the Academic Program Prioritization Working Group (APPWG) and charged it with evaluating and prioritizing all UMaine academic programs, stating that “the goal of this process will be strong support of our highest priority degree programs funded by a reduction in those ranked as our lowest priorities” (President’s Charge to APPWG). In its final report, APPWG recommended the elimination of the Department of Public Administration. President Kennedy accepted this recommendation. In implementing this decision, this is a proposal to suspend the Bachelor of Arts in Public Management program pending final decision on the elimination of the Department. Concurrently, a similar proposal is being made to suspend the Department’s graduate program, the Master of Public Administration.

Five-Year Summary of Program Enrollments

The BA program in Public Management is housed in the Department of Public Administration. There are four full-time regular faculty members who teach most of the undergraduate courses that make up the BA in Public Management program. Adjunct faculty members teach some courses in the curriculum as needed.

A summary of the Public Management majors and degrees conferred over the past five years is included in the following table¹. The number of majors is based upon fall headcounts.

Academic Year	Majors	Degrees
2005-2006	52	14
2006-2007	54	14
2007-2008	54	18
2008-2009	42	8
2009-2010	46	20

Rationale

Within the APPWG process, the College of Business, Public Policy and Health was directed to identify and implement budget cuts of approximately 20% over a three year period. A strategic decision was made to identify and preserve the programs that contributed most to the teaching, research, and service mission of the University, and eliminate other programs and units with smaller contributions. The Department of Public Administration was targeted for elimination primarily because of low enrollment. Very few undergraduate students come to the University to study Public Management (e.g., only one new student came in the Fall 2008, prior to the APPWG process). Most tend to change into this program from other majors at the University. The five-year total of conferred undergraduate degrees ranks the Department of Public Administration 35th of 44 units in the University. The Department’s research and outside grants cannot offset

¹ All data cited here come from the Office of Institutional Studies.

this low demand. The contributions of the Department do not make it viable in the current period of severe strain on resources.

The proposal for eliminating the Department of Public Administration will be reviewed in the 2010-2011 academic year following University of Maine System policy and procedures.

Faculty Assignment during Suspension Period

There will be no change in the assignment of faculty during the first year (2010-11). If the elimination of the Department is approved, it will be carried out primarily by attrition, as three of the four faculty are eligible and likely to retire. Opportunities are being explored to find alternative employment for the fourth faculty member, who in any case will likely be needed to teach out the students currently in the program.

Impact on students

While the loss of any program narrows down the choices for students and is unfortunate, the University can redirect students with interests in Public Management to alternative programs in Business Administration, Political Science, and Economics. Thus the net loss of students will be minimal.

Current students will not be impacted during the program suspension period as the University will offer the required classes over a period of up to four years so that they can finish their course of study.

Timetable

Pending approval, the suspension of the BA in Public Management program will commence in January 2011. No new students will be admitted to the program while it is under suspension. The program will be considered by May 31, 2011 for elimination.

Meetings/Discussions Regarding Proposed Suspension

The former Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Health and the Chair and faculty of the Department of Public Administration met several times in 2009-10 to discuss the proposed elimination. A public forum was held on March 29, 2010 where concerns of graduates of the program and employers were voiced and discussed. The Dean met with AFUM's representative on October 26, 2010. The current proposal incorporates AFUM's suggestions about rationale and faculty assignments.