

Urban Studies M.U.S.

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Master of Urban Studies Program offers graduate students a high quality degree program in Urban Services that meets national standards of excellence. Program faculty are committed to quality teaching and discovery of new knowledge. The Master of Urban Services Program supports the University's mission of providing advanced professional education for the Hampton Roads area and the Commonwealth.

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The Masters of Studies Program supports the University goals of (a) quality graduate academic programs, (b) quality teaching, (c) discovery of new knowledge, and (d) community service. (See pages 3-4 of the Old Dominion University Catalog or pages 8-9 of the Strategic Plan.) The Master of Urban Services Program also supports Strategic Initiative 2 (Excellent Graduate Programs). (See the Old Dominion University Strategic Plan.)

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

*Students will demonstrate a comprehensive overview of the field of Urban Studies and Urban Services.*The learning experience will be both theoretically and empirically based.

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: *Annual alumni focus groups *Student satisfaction survey

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1: Focus groups and student satisfaction surveys indicate that student levels of satisfaction with the MUS program range from "satisfied" to "very satisfied."

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 1 to Improve Academic Program: No changes are contemplated at this time as a result of assessment data for outcome number one.

Intended Outcome 2

*To enhance knowledge and competencies of mid-career practitioners who aspire to professional development within their current position or to change career orientation through lateral transfers from, for example, local to state or federal government or to non-profit organizations.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: *Annual alumni focus groups *Student satisfaction survey*Successful completion of the capstone courses or, alternatively, providing internship opportunities for students who have no organizational experiences and requiring them to write an internship report which is supervised by a faculty member and the internship on-site supervisor.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2: Summary data indicates very high success rates for the very few students who avail themselves of internship opportunities. Completion rates for that capstone experience are high, however, approximately 10-15% of students fail to complete the required capstone paper.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 2 to Improve Academic Program: Graduate Center faculty are scheduled to discuss possible alternatives to the capstone research paper, including the possibility of a capstone class for MUS students similar to the very successful MPA capstone class.

Intended Outcome 3

*To provide students with a firm grounding in public service, understanding professional values, professional ethics.*To encourage professional commitment and growth in the field of Urban Services

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: *Surveying student memberships in professional associations and participation in professional conferences and workshops which are locally and nationally available.*Careful monitoring of students' responses to cases on ethical issues and scenarios that require professional commitment.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3: Significant numbers of MUS students are members of professional associations, particularly the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA. Several MUS students have also participated in professional conferences.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 3 to Improve Academic Program: Graduate Center faculty continue to explore ways to add more "ethical issues" content to MUS courses. This already occurs to some extent, but continued improvement is a goal we are pursuing.

Intended Outcome 4

*To help students acquire applied knowledge.

Method for Assessing Outcome 4 and Criterion for Success: * Assessing the students' knowledge of research methods, program evaluation, policy analysis in the field of program design and economic development.*Successful completion of the capstone courses or, alternatively, providing internship opportunities for students who have no organizational experiences and requiring them to write an internship report which is supervised by a faculty member and the internship on-site supervisor.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 4: The large majority of students taking research methods, program evaluation and policy analysis have completed the courses with a grade of B or better. However, the lowest student grade point average of any core course occurs with the research methods course.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 4 to Improve Academic Program: At this time, no changes are contemplated to the program evaluation and policy analysis core courses. The research methods core course is being carefully reviewed to determine whether course materials (including SPSS), instructional techniques and quantitative methods covered are appropriate for the purposes of the course.