SPAA OPERATIONALIZATION OF NASPAA UNIVERSAL REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

1. To lead and manage in the public interest.

The competency " to lead and manage in the public interest" is operationally defined as guiding and administering public organizations effectively while upholding democratic principles, ensuring accountability, and promoting efficiency and equity.

The learning outcomes of this competency include:

- Students will be able to understand major public and nonprofit administrative theories and how they apply to the management of public organizations. This includes the ability to identify and solve complex public management problems, as well as the skill to apply appropriate analytical approaches.
- Students should develop a deep sense of appreciation of and commitment to the core principles of constitution and democratic governance, an accurate understanding of their meaning, and the ability to apply them to contemporary public administration and policy issues.
- Students should be able to demonstrate effective leadership in complex public sector environments by making decisions that balance competing interests and reflect public values.
- Students should be able to conduct strategic planning and ensure effective implementation. This includes the ability to develop and execute strategic plans that align public organization goals with the broader public interest, and the ability to monitor, evaluate, and adjust the implementation of strategic initiatives.
- Students should be able to develop and implement management systems that enhance and measure the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of public service delivery.

2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process.

The competency "to participate in and contribute to the public policy process" is operationally defined as the ability to engage effectively in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies.

The learning outcomes of this competency include:

- Students should develop a deep appreciation of the role of professional expertise in public policy processes. This includes the ability to articulate why professional expertise guided by democratic principles is critical to policy-making in a democratic society.

- Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of policy processes at various governmental levels. This involves the ability to describe the stages of the public policy process, including problem identification, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. This also involves the ability to explain the roles of various stakeholders or policy actors (e.g., government agencies, interest groups, the public) in shaping the public policy processes.
- Students will be able to effectively engage in policy formulation. This includes the ability to frame a policy issue effectively and draft policy proposals with clear objectives, strategies, and anticipated outcomes. This also includes the ability to collaborate with various stakeholders to develop policy options that reflect diverse interests.
- Students will be able to contribute to policy implementation. This includes the ability to design and implement action plans that translate policy decisions into practical and concrete actions, the ability to manage resources effectively to ensure successful implementation, and the ability to identify and mitigate potential challenges and obstacles during policy implementation.
- Students will be able to evaluate public policies rigorously. This includes the ability to design and conduct policy and program evaluations, and the ability to use evaluation findings to inform future policy development.
- Students will be able to navigate the political environment and advocate for public policies that promote the public interest. This includes the ability to analyze the political context of policy issues, build coalitions and partnerships, and engage with the public and stakeholders to build support for policy initiatives.

3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.

The competency "to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment " is defined as the ability to clearly define research questions or problems, develop and test hypotheses, use appropriate analytical methods, organize and present data, and interpret findings within a practical context. This competency is essential for effective decision-making and problem-solving in public and nonprofit organizations.

The learning outcomes of this competency include:

- Students should develop a deep appreciation of and commitment to the use of scientific methods and evidence in public decision-making. This includes heightened awareness of the negative impact of misinformation and political bias in public administration and policy.

- Students will be able to identify, understand, and evaluate the knowledge basis of a public administration and policy issue. This includes the ability to search for relevant literature from various sources, to critically analyze and synthesize the literature to develop an accurate understanding of the issue and well-supported arguments, and to integrate knowledge across disciplines and perspectives to address multifaceted problems.
- Students will be able to define a research question effectively. This involves the ability to apply research methods correctly for problem-solving, to clearly articulate research problems that are relevant, specific, and researchable, and to identify and critically evaluate the underlying assumptions and constraints related to the problem.
- Students will be able to design research strategies that can address the research problem convincingly and ethically. This includes the ability to apply appropriate analytical methods, use some analytical software, and evaluate the strengths and limitations of various analytical methods.
- Students will be able to communicate data and analytical results effectively to stakeholders. This involves the ability to use data reporting technologies, to organize complex data sets in a logical and coherent manner, to present data using tables, charts, graphs, and other visualization tools. to interpret findings fairly and critically, and to draw evidence-informed conclusions.

4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective.

The competency "to articulate, apply and advance a public service perspective" is defined as the ability to recognize and address ethical challenges, identify and uphold key public service values, incorporate diverse stakeholder perspectives, and demonstrate a broad understanding of cultural diversity. This competency is essential for fostering an inclusive, equitable, and accountable public service environment.

The learning outcomes of this competency include:

- Students should develop a deep appreciation of and commitment to public service values. This includes developing an appreciation of the work of public service professionals, a calling for public service, and a commitment to public service values.
- Students will be able to identify, apply, and uphold key public service values. This includes the ability to articulate core public service values such as accountability, responsiveness, transparency, and justice, identify the competing public values underlying a public administration issue, and evaluate policies to ensure they align with and promote public service values.

- Students will be able to recognize and address ethical challenges in public service organizations. This includes the ability to identify and analyze ethical dilemmas in public service contexts, apply ethical frameworks to make decisions, advocate for ethical practices, model ethical leadership, and assess and improve the ethical culture of an organization.
- Students will be able to community and advance a public service perspective and public service values. This includes the ability to communicate the importance of public service values, craft messages that highlight the ethical and cultural dimensions of public service work, and design and lead initiatives that advance public service values.
- Students will be able to advance cultural diversity. This includes the ability to demonstrate cultural competence by recognizing and respecting cultural differences in public service contexts, design and implement policies and programs that are responsive to diverse populations, and analyze the role of cultural diversity in shaping public service delivery and outcomes.
- Students will be able to incorporate and balance diverse stakeholder perspectives. This involves the ability to identify and engage with diverse stakeholders and assess the impact of public policies on different stakeholder groups, particularly marginalized or underserved communities.

5. To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

The competency " to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large" is defined as the ability to effectively convey ideas, incorporate multiple perspectives, present information clearly and professionally, and engage respectfully with diverse audiences. This competency is crucial for fostering inclusive dialogue, promoting understanding, and facilitating productive interactions in public service settings.

The learning outcomes of this competency include:

- Students should develop a deep appreciation of and commitment to diversity, dialogue, and positive social change.
- Students will be able to communicate effectively with a diverse audience. This includes knowledge about communication theories and models, and the ability to articulate ideas clearly and concisely in both written and oral communication, the ability to tailor communication style and language to different audiences, the ability to use appropriate communication channels and technologies.

- Students will be able to engage with diverse audiences. This includes the ability to demonstrate cultural sensitivity when interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds, recognize and address potential biases in communication, engage in active listening, and identify and mitigate potential cross-cultural barriers.
- Students will be able to build relationships across cultural boundaries. This includes the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, collaborate with teams from various backgrounds, and promote a culture of inclusivity and shared purpose.
- Students will be able to engage in conflict resolution in a diverse environment. This includes the ability to use basic conflict concepts and tools to analyze relevant issues, identify and resolve communication breakdowns in a manner that respects the perspectives of all parties, and create communication protocols that minimize conflict and enhance trust.

RUTGERS SPAA VALUES

The program is designed using a set of core public service values; competence, diversity, service, ethics, and knowledge. These values are instrumental in shaping our curriculum development, programming, faculty hiring, and overall student experience. These values include:

A. Competence: Our competence value is rooted in the belief that communities and their residents deserve highly skilled professionals capable of competently addressing complex public challenges. By prioritizing competence, the program ensures that our graduates are prepared to provide the public with services based on foundational proficiency.

B. Diversity: Our diversity value recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals and the richness that diverse perspectives bring to public service. This value is reflected in the program's commitment to incorporating a wide range of racial, ethnic, gender, religious, sexual orientation, political, and national backgrounds and perspectives in the student body and faculty as well as in the curriculum.

C. Service: Our service value is rooted in the belief that public service professionals must prioritize the needs of the community and work responsively to improve the lives of the people they serve. By emphasizing service throughout the program, we instill in our students a deep commitment to the public good and prepare them to make a positive impact through their work in the public and nonprofit sectors.

D. Ethics: Our ethics value underpins the MPA program's pedagogical approach to theory and practice. This value is rooted in the belief that public service professionals must uphold public trust and act in the best interests of the people they serve. By emphasizing

ethics, the program is designed to instill in students a strong principled framework to guide their decision-making and actions and ensure that they uphold the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

E. Knowledge: Our knowledge value is rooted in the belief that the public deserves professionals who can effectively address public challenges through evidence-based decision-making and a deep understanding of complex problems. The importance of the acquisition of knowledge is reflected in the program's commitment to empowering students to identify relevant theories, collaborate with their communities, and participate in applied research projects. By valuing knowledge, the program equips students with the intellectual tools and critical thinking skills necessary to tackle the complex challenges facing the public and nonprofit sectors.