This report begins with an executive summary that provides an overview of our progress to date relative our specific work plan/goals for 2016, as well as a brief review of the key components in the report.

The executive summary is followed by a more detailed report specifically addressing the Executive Council’s evaluation of our 2015 report. This report address the seven checklist indicators as identified in the request for this Annual Report. These include: (1) Updated Learning Goals, (2) Assessment Plan, Structure, and Process, (3) Assessment Tools, (4) Benchmarks/Standards, (5) Assessment Implementation and Results, (6) Response to Assessment Results: “Closing the Loop” activities, and (7) Maintenance/Updating Process

This Annual Report concludes with a brief description of our plan for 2016.

Overall, we believe we have made substantial progress in implementing the learning outcomes assessment and in integrating the analysis of those data into curricular and operational decision making by the School. Moving forward, we intend to expand the system to the BA Program, and ultimately, to the Ph.D. Program as well as our certificate a dual degree programs.

We continue to be grateful for the committee’s review of our assessment efforts, your evaluation, and support of our work in this area.

Annie Virkus, PhD
Associate Dean
2016 Goals and Results
Executive Summary

Executive Council’s Narrative Response to the 2015 Annual Assessment Report

In ECA’s Narrative Response, issued July 15, 2015, the following checklist points were made. The 2015 status of each point is highlighted. Where suggestions were made, a summary of our actions to date to address the concerns are included:

- Updated Learning Goals (Making Continued Progress)
  - As a result of implementing the full outcome assessment program for MPAs, we learned that we needed to adjust the goals for one class (Administrative Ethics). That adjustment has been made.

- Assessment Plan Structure and Process (Making Continued Progress)
  - The Executive Council’s had no recommendations, but the ECA anticipated the expansion of the assessment program to other courses and to the BA and Ph.D. programs.
    - The School expanded the assessment program to include all core classes in the on-campus MPA, on-line MPA, and Executive MPA programs in Fall 2015. The assessment was expanded to include all electives for these programs in Spring 2016.
    - The School is currently developing learning outcomes for the BA program and anticipates testing them on a sample of classes this summer. They will be submitted for full faculty approval in the fall.
  - We are continuing to streamline the process to make it less onerous to faculty and to improve consistency of the assessments.

- Assessment Tool and Measures (Meets Current ECA Standards)
  - The ECA had no recommendations. We continue to refine our measures and assessment tools.

- Benchmark/Standards (Meets Current ECA Standards)
  - While no recommendations were made by ECA, we note that this is a self-study year for our accreditation under NASPAA. This will include updated benchmarking relative to our peer schools.

- Assessment Implementation and Results (Making Continued Progress)
  - The ECA was awaiting the completion of course-based individual student assessments for our core courses.
  - We have conducted (and included) extensive analysis of the data received in the 2015-2016 academic year.
    - At the program level, our on-campus MPA, on-line MPA, and Executive MPA programs all met our strategic goal of having at least 80% of assessments “meeting or exceeding” expectations.
    - The 80% target was met for all learning outcomes.
    - 65% of students assessed met or exceeded expectation on every indicator for which they were assessed.
• Closing the Loop Activities (Does Not Meet Current ECA Standards)
  o The ECA urged the School to focus on “closing the loop” activities as soon as results became available.
  o The School is now using the results of individual-based assessments to:
    ▪ Identify students that may be having difficulties;
    ▪ Identify specific courses where unexpectedly high numbers of students are not meeting expectations; and,
    ▪ Look for possible inconsistencies in performance between similar courses taught by different instructors.
  o The assessment results from fall and spring semesters identified a number of specific areas of curricular concern, including the ability to formulate hypotheses, and poor writing skills. We are currently in the process of formulating recommendations to address these concerns. These will be presented to the MPA Committee when it reconvenes in the Fall. Immediate administrative changes are also being made.

• Maintenance/Updating Process (Making Continued Progress)
  o The ECA made no recommendations on this item.
  o SPAA has placed responsibility for updating the procedures and maintaining data to its director for public data and institutional research.
  o There are now protocols in place for:
    ▪ Training faculty in use of the system
    ▪ Collecting data each semester
    ▪ Reporting of the data to the faculty each semester
  o We expect the first data to be publicly posted in September.
  o SPAA has updated its Student Learning Outcomes based on data received from its early implementation.
  o SPAA is developing a database management system to allow more sophisticated querying of the data filtered by student, course, semester, or faculty member.
2016 Annual Assessment Report

In this report, we discuss the evolution of our assessment program in academic year 2015-2016. This includes:

- Full implementation of the program for MPA students;
- Analysis of the data, including percentages of students meeting or exceeding expectations;
  - These same figures disaggregated by program and course, to identify specific skills or courses where improvement may be needed;
- Curricular and operational decision being made to address areas of concern identified by the assessment; and,
- Areas where the assessment methodology can be improved by making it more informative and less burdensome to faculty

Background

Knowing that ECA members may not remember all the details of the SPAA assessment program, the key points of the program are as follows:

- SPAA’s assessment system includes five broad learning outcomes, which are required by our accrediting body;¹
- Each course in the program has been assigned a primary and secondary learning outcome from these five;
- Progress toward each outcome is tracked using between five and seven performance indicators;
- Each semester, every faculty member designates one assignment in their course for the assessment;
- Students are assessed on each performance measure for the primary learning outcomes assigned to that course. Assessment consists of rating each student as “does not meet expectations,” “meets expectation,” or “exceeds expectations”; and,
- Our primary performance target is that 80% of available assessments should “meet or exceed expectations” for each indicator being assessed.

Updated Learning Goals

In 2015, the ECA found that SPAA was making continued progress on updating its student learning outcomes.

¹ Please note that we use the language “Student Learning Outcomes” (SLOs), which is the language of our accrediting organization.
In 2016, as a result of our fall semester implementation experience, we found that SLO #4 (Articulating and Applying a Public Service Perspective) was not being assessed in enough courses to provide sufficient data. Accordingly, we adjusted the SLOs for one class (Ethics in Public Administration) to include #4.

Assessment Plan, Structure, and Process

In 2015, the ECA found that SPAA was making continued progress on this item and made no specific recommendations. However, the ECA anticipated the expansion of our assessment system to include additional courses and programs. In academic year 2015-16, there has been a great deal of progress in this respect.

In fall semester 2015, we fully implemented the collection of SLOs for core courses in the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program. Core courses account for 33 of the 42 units needed to graduate the program. Outcome data were collected for 581 students in 21 courses. Note that there is repetition of students because they may be assessed for more than one course. The assessment included data for 56 individual indicators related to four of our five learning outcomes.

In spring semester, 2016, the assessment program was extended beyond core courses to include all MPA courses. Preparation for the spring semester assessment included a variety of responses to lessons learned in the fall (discussed more fully under the section on Responding to Assessment Results, below). As a result of these actions, we achieved dramatically improved coverage of students in spring semester, including at least one assessment for all MPA students. In all, there were 1,034 assessments made. Of course, many students were evaluated in more than one class. Responses were received for 42 different courses and 85% of all sections offered. Several of the missing sections are expected to be completed late, as the faculty in charge were travelling and have promised completion of their assessments upon their return.

We also achieved better coverage (i.e., more students assessed) for each individual learning outcome (Table 1). Equally important, we now have results for outcome #4, and many more observations for outcome #5. Please note that outcome #3 is assessed more frequently than other outcomes because it is the primary learning outcome for a large percentage of our courses.
### Table 1
Number of Assessments
By Learning Outcome,
Fall 2015 and Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To be able to lead and manage in public governance.</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To apply a public service perspective.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To communicate and interact with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenship.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>581</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,034</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Tools and Measures**

In 2015, the ECA determined that SPAA’s assessment system met current ECA standards.

This summer, we will be conducting additional analysis to identify if there are significant inconsistencies in assessments between different faculty members teaching the same course. If apparent inconsistencies are identified, they will be monitored in future assessments to determine if corrective action is needed.
Benchmarks/Standards

In 2015, the ECA determined that SPAA’s assessment system met current ECA standards.

We continue to use the targets and benchmarking methods described in our Student Learning Outcomes Measurement Handbook. Our primary performance target is that 80% of available assessments should “meet or exceed expectations” for each indicator being assessed. The AY 2015-16 data provide a set of baseline observations as a reference to build upon.

Assessment Implementation and Results

Fall 2015 Results:

Overall, 96% percent of the indicators assessed met SPAA’s stated goal that 80% of students should meet or exceed expectations for that indicator. The two indicators for which this standard was not met were both in Administrative Ethics, and related to the assessments of a single professor. Eighty-two percent (82%) of all indicators assessed had at least 90% of students meeting or exceeding expectations. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the indicators were met or exceeded by all students.

We also examined the results by outcome and by individual course (Table 2). Unfortunately, only two of five learning outcomes included data from more than a single class. One outcome had no data collected at all (#4, Applying a Public Service Perspective). For the two learning outcomes that included most of the data received, there were statistically different results in the performance of students. That is, students were generally assessed to be doing better on Outcome 2 (participate in and contribute to the public policy process) than on outcome 3 (analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions) (P=.001). We will continue to monitor this.

There were also several courses in which every student met or exceeded expectations on every (or nearly every) indicator. While this is a positive result, we will continue to track the results in the future to ensure all faculty are applying a sufficiently critical standard.
Table 2
Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations
By Learning Outcome and Course, Fall 2015
Core Courses

1. To be able to lead and manage in public governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student references relevant public administration theories.</th>
<th>b. The student clearly identifies and states a management problem.</th>
<th>c. The student correctly follows an appropriate analytic approach.</th>
<th>d. The student accommodates conflicting points of view.</th>
<th>e. Practical and actionable recommendations result from the analysis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:501: Intro to PA (n=101)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:521 Tech &amp; PA (n=84)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:522 Managing Public Orgs. (n=49)</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student demonstrates familiarity with the policy process and theories of change.</th>
<th>b. The student employs an accountability perspective emphasizing performance.</th>
<th>c. Organizational context and its impact on the problem is considered in the analysis.</th>
<th>d. Sources of conflict are identified and integrated into the analysis.</th>
<th>e. Clear action-oriented recommendation are supported by evidence.</th>
<th>2. The student demonstrates clear understanding of the distinction between analysis and advocacy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:541 Political Economy and PA (n=55)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (Continued)
Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations
By Learning Outcome and Course, Fall 2015
Core Courses

3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student clearly states a research question or problem related to public or nonprofit organizations</th>
<th>b. The student identifies alternative hypotheses, and the analysis considers them.</th>
<th>c. The student uses the appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods to examine the problem.</th>
<th>d. The student organizes, and presents data or evidence reasonably related to the stated problem.</th>
<th>e. All sources and data drawn upon in the research are correctly cited and referenced. Practical implications of the analysis are identified, correctly interpreted, and discussed from a management perspective.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:515 Administrative Ethics (n=68)</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:561 Applied Statistics (n=10)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:562 Applied Research Design (n=50)</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:524 Strategic Planning (n=97)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:542 Public Budgeting Systems (n=44)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. To communicate and interact with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student acknowledges and incorporates multiple points of view into the analysis.</th>
<th>b. The organization and logic of the student’s arguments are clear and compelling in light of complex subject matter.</th>
<th>c. Documents or reports are formatted and presented in a professional manner.</th>
<th>d. Spelling, grammar, style, and language are correct and appropriate for the audience.</th>
<th>e. All sources and data drawn upon in the research are correctly cited and referenced. f. Problems, concepts, analysis and recommendations are clearly and accurately described. g. Mastery of the subject is revealed through the use of facts, figures, and content.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:523 Human Resources Admin. (n=23)</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spring 2016 Results:

Table 3 shows the overall results for Spring 2016, at the program level, with the on-campus MPA program further divided into core and elective courses. Every program met our goal of having students meet or exceed expectations at least 80% of the time. We note that the missing evaluations for outcomes 1, 2, and 4 are due to the fact that courses assessed on those outcomes were not offered in the Spring.

Table 3
Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations By Learning Outcome and Program, Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>MPA Core Classes</th>
<th>MPA Electives</th>
<th>Executive MPA</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To be able to lead and manage in public governance.</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To apply a public service perspective.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To communicate and interact with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenship.</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows detailed results of the Spring assessment by learning outcome and by course. Most of the courses shown include results from more than a single section/instructor. Overall, 93% percent of the indicators met SPAA’s goal that 80% of student assessments should meet or exceed expectations. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the indicators had at least 90% of students meet or exceed the standard. Fifteen percent (15%) of the indicators were met or exceeded by all students. Sixty five percent (65%) of students assessed met or exceeded the standards for every indicator on which they were assessed.

Relative to Fall, the Administrative Ethics course that had low assessments in the Fall had good indicators in the Spring. Specific areas identified with weak assessments that are of concern to the MPA Committee include:

- Poor scores on Indicator 3B (ability to state hypotheses) for Applied Research Design;
- Poor scores on Indicator 3C (use of appropriate methods) for Capstone
• There were also poor writing skills identified (Indicators 5B and 5C) for small numbers of students taking internships and in the EMPA program.

Overall, there were less frequent assessments of “exceeds standards” and more frequent assessments of “does not meet expectations” in Spring than in Fall. We do not believe this is a reflection of overall poorer performance, as grade point averages have remained strong. Rather we believe it reflects a more realistic assessment of student abilities by the faculty as the latter integrate assessments into their normal grading procedures. Given the much larger data set acquired in the Spring term, this will be our baseline for analysis going forward.
1. To be able to lead and manage in public governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student references relevant public administration theories.</th>
<th>b. The student clearly identifies and states a management problem.</th>
<th>c. The student correctly follows an appropriate analytic approach.</th>
<th>d. The student accommodates conflicting points of view.</th>
<th>e. Practical and actionable recommendations result from the analysis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:501: Intro to PA (n=74)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:521 Tech &amp; PA (n=89)</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:522 Managing Public Orgs. (n=86)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student demonstrates familiarity with the policy process and theories of change.</th>
<th>b. The student employs an accountability perspective emphasizing performance.</th>
<th>c. Organizational context and its impact on the problem is considered in the analysis.</th>
<th>d. Sources of conflict are identified and integrated into the analysis.</th>
<th>e. Clear action-oriented recommendation s are supported by evidence.</th>
<th>2. The student demonstrates clear understanding of the distinction between analysis and advocacy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:541 Political Economy and PA (n=83)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:561</td>
<td>Applied Statistics (n=82)</td>
<td>90% 82% 88% 90% 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:562</td>
<td>Applied Research Design (n=66)</td>
<td>91% 64% 85% 85% 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:524</td>
<td>Strategic Planning (n=85)</td>
<td>97% 94% 93% 94% 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:542</td>
<td>Public Budgeting Systems (n=112)</td>
<td>96% 93% 88% 88% 93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:515</td>
<td>Administrative Ethics (n=74)</td>
<td>93% 91% 97% 89% 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:565</td>
<td>Capstone (n=121)</td>
<td>92% 80% 75% 90% 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:526</td>
<td>Evidence-Based Public Mgt. &amp; Policy (n=31)</td>
<td>100% 100% 100% 100% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:576</td>
<td>Fundraising for nonprofit Organizations (n=29)</td>
<td>72% 72% 100% 100% 97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:578</td>
<td>Results Driven Strategic Mgt. (n=29)</td>
<td>97% 91% 97% 89% 95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:515</td>
<td>Administrative Ethics (n=74)</td>
<td>93% 91% 97% 89% 95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. To communicate and interact with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>a. The student acknowledges and incorporates multiple points of view into the analysis.</th>
<th>b. The organization and logic of the student’s arguments are clear and compelling in light of complex subject matter.</th>
<th>c. Documents or reports are formatted and presented in a professional manner.</th>
<th>d. Spelling, grammar, style, and language are correct and appropriate for the audience.</th>
<th>e. All sources and data drawn upon in the research are correctly cited and referenced.</th>
<th>f. Problems, concepts, analysis and recommendations are clearly and accurately described.</th>
<th>Mastery of the subject is revealed through the use of facts, figures, and content.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20:834:523 Human Resources Admin. (n=70)</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:834:590 Internship (n=5)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response to the Assessment Results—Closing the Loop Activities

Part of SPAA’s responses to its assessment experience were changes in the methodology and protocols used in the assessment. In the fall 2015 assessment, approximately 40% of core course instructors did not submit their assessments. This included both full-time and part-time faculty. Based on this experience, the MPA Committee concluded that:

- There needed to be additional effort taken—both before and during the grading period—to remind faculty that it is their responsibility to complete the SLO assessments;
- It would be helpful to faculty to provide additional training in the administration of the assessments. This training should encourage more consistent assessments across classes and reduce the burden on faculty by helping them understand how they can build the assessments into their normal workload; and,
- SPAA needed to adjust its learning outcomes to get better coverage on outcome #4 (Articulating and Applying a Public Service Perspective).

Based on the experience described above, SPAA made several changes to the assessment methodology/protocol for spring, 2016:

- Learning outcome #4 was added as the primary SLO for Administrative Ethics.
- Training in the assessment procedure was provided to part-time faculty as part of their mandatory orientation session. It was made clear that completion of the assessment was a requirement of employment. SPAA administrators also described the assessment method and answered questions about the process. In particular, we made suggestions regarding how instructors could build these activities into their grading so as to minimize any burden caused by the assessments;
- Similar activities were done with full-time faculty during a faculty meeting. Full-time faculty were reminded during subsequent meetings that the assessment was coming up. Faculty were also provided results of the fall assessment to demonstrate the value of the data.
- A detailed letter was sent in mid-semester to all faculty reminding them to build the assessment process into one of their assignments.
- All faculty were provided links to an on-line survey to complete the data entry.
- Repeated follow-up letters were sent during, and after, the grading period to remind faculty to complete their assessments.

In addition to these methodological changes, there are changes that target student learning more directly. As noted above, there was one course (Administrative Ethics) with problematic assessments in the fall that had reversed itself in the spring. We are continuing to monitor that course.

As noted on pages 8-9 above, the Spring assessment identified possible weaknesses in student performance related to:
• Poor scores on Indicator 3B (ability to state hypotheses) for Applied Research Design;
• Poor scores on Indicator 3C (use of appropriate methods) for Capstone; and,
• There were also poor writing skills identified (Indicators 5B and 5C) for small numbers of students taking internships and in the EMPA program.

Because our analysis was completed after the end of spring term, most faculty had already left for the summer and there were no further meetings of the MPA Committee planned until fall. However, discussion of these items has already been placed on the agenda for the first fall meeting of that committee. Several possible responses will be discussed at that time:

• Recommendation that faculty in Applied Statistics and Applied Research Design devote additional time the topics of formulating hypotheses and selecting among methods;
• Creation of on-line summary guides and examples for both of these topics;
• Recommendation that the Capstone class place more emphasis on reviewing student methodologies in advance.

In addition, several activities have already been undertaken, or are planned during the summer:

• Instructors in Applied Statistics, Applied Research Design, and Capstone, will be told of the assessment results and asked to submit suggestions on how to improve performance in these areas;
• Effective this term, Applied Statistics is no longer being taught in the summer. It is the belief of faculty and staff familiar with the problem that the condensed schedules in summer make it difficult for students to process the information sufficiently, and summer courses are more reliant on part-time faculty;
• SPAA already is very proactive on helping students with their writing, and has its own Writing Center and writing coach. These results confirm the value of these investments. Recently the Writing Center has been relocated to be centrally positioned within the student services administrative area. We are working with the director of the Writing Center to integrate his assessment process with the SLO assessment process;

SPAA has also experimented with using the assessment results to improve advising of students. As part of the fall semester analysis, we identified any students that had multiple ratings of “did not meet expectations.” This was essentially a way of flagging students who might be having difficulty. Thirteen such students were identified. Nine of these students were in the Administrative Ethics class mentioned previously, and none of the students had poor assessments on outcomes in more than one class. After reviewing the records of the students, most were determined to be in reasonable academic standing and under appropriate monitoring by their advisors. One student who had previously received good reviews was flagged and his advisor was notified that he might be having problems.

Processing of the spring 2016 data has allowed us to develop a much better idea of our analytical requirements. To identify significant change in the indicators over time, we need to
be able to look at multiple semesters of data together. We also need to be able to filter the
data on any of several different variables (e.g., student, course, or learning outcome).
Accordingly, we are now developing—and will soon test—a relational database system for
analyzing the SLO data. This will allow us to track individual students, or to track individual
courses and SLOs over time. This is essentially a digital (and more sophisticated) version of the
Student Portfolio envisioned in the original SLO methodology.

Maintenance/Updating Process

In 2015, the ECA determined SPAA was continuing to make progress on this item.

SPAA will be going through re-accreditation in academic year 2016-2017. Examination of the
school’s assessment of student learning will be a significant part of these activities.

Planned Activities for Academic Year 2016-2017:

Summer 2016:
- Conduct additional analysis of spring 2016 results and prepare series of policy and
  administrative recommendations;
- Develop relational database to allow more sophisticated querying/tracking of individual
  students, courses, and SLOs;
- Develop and test proposed SLOs for the BA program;
- Work with SPAA Writing Center to integrate their existing assessments into the SLO
  assessment system;
- Provide faculty with assessment results affecting their classes, and asked to submit
  comments/suggestions for administrative/curricular changes;
- Investigate alternatives to current survey based data collection that would be easier for
  faculty; and,
- Post summary assessment results to SPAA web site.

AY 2016-2017:
- Present assessment results with policy recommendations to MPA, BA, and Ph.D. faculty
  committees;
- Submit proposed protocols for BA program assessment to BA Committee and Faculty
  approval;
- Ph.D. Committee develops SLOs and assigns them to courses;
- Ph.D. Committee begins development of SLOs for Doctoral Program; and,
- Revise SLO assessment handbook to reflect any changes.