Academic Program Assessment Data Report (2019)
Ph.D. degree program in Public Policy (PUBPPH)
Submitted by Brinck Kerr, Director

Introduction
This report includes the presentation of (1) PUBP student learning outcomes; (2) how learning outcomes are assessed; (3) timelines for data collection and analysis; and (4) guidelines for use of results. Assessment data for calendar year 2019 are presented below each learning outcome or set of outcomes in the section "Assessment of Student Learning." All data are in bold.

Student Learning Outcomes
(Student Learning Outcomes are defined in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students will know and be able to do as a result of completing a program. These student learning outcomes are directly linked to the accomplishment of the program goals.)

Students near the end of their coursework should be able to:

(1)   conduct research in a collaborative (or team) setting that will inform some aspect of policy making on a community issue;

(2)   apply policy recommendations to a real world problem or issue;

(3)   demonstrate that they have the requisite policy core, specialization, and methods skills necessary to progress to the dissertation stage;

(4)   demonstrate the ability to do independent research;

(5)   expand upon or "test" public policy and/or specialization area theories;

(6)   contribute to new scholarly/academic knowledge; and

(7)   contribute to policy relevant knowledge.

Assessment of Student Learning
(A process must be defined and documented to regularly assess student learning and achievement of student learning outcomes. The results of the assessment must be utilized as input for the improvement of the program.)

All educational/learning outcomes (i.e. outcomes 1 through 7 in section 2 above) are evaluated by program faculty.

Outcomes 1 and 2 are primarily evaluated in PUBP 6134, the Capstone Seminar. In their last semester of coursework, policy students participate as team members in a capstone service project. The service project is designed to (1) inform some aspect of policy making—usually relating to a community issue—and (2) apply policy recommendations to a real world policy

problem or issue. Students receive a grade for the seminar and they make a public presentation on their project [meeting program goals 2 and 3].

Summary of from spring 2019 report ---

The conundrum of property rights has been a point of discussion for several years in America. Questions regarding ownership, land rights, responsibility for maintenance of dwellings, justice, and fairness have led to ambiguous regulations. In many jurisdictions, questions regarding rental property rights have amplified the legal confusion. Considerations regarding fairness, equity, and protection are the foundation of many landlord-tenant issues.

Forty-nine out of fifty states have inherent protections for both landlords and tenants. Arkansas is the ONLY state that does not offer meaningful tenant protections. Despite the growing popularity of states adopting tenant-friendly policies and examining methods to increase protections for renters within their state, Arkansas has steadfastly remained the last holdout. Oddly, most of Arkansas rental property laws evolved from 16th century policies (Bachelder et al., 2016).

Some communities are enhancing protections for renters because of the direct link between property conditions, public health, and the local economy (Wu et al., 2007). Others are intensifying tenant safeguards through legislation at the local level. As the state rental population continues to grow, Arkansas must actively investigate both options.

The city of Fayetteville, AR is investigating improvements in tenant rights policies, despite significant opposition from state policymakers. Reticence to confront landlords, the lack of political will, a high rental occupancy rate, and an underinformed tenant population are among the primary challenges Fayetteville must overcome. Yet, other communities have passed progressive, tenant-friendly policies despite similar reluctance (City of Lawrence. 2019; Town of Chapel Hill. 2019).

No students enrolled in the capstone seminar during fall 2019.

Outcome 3 is primarily evaluated during the qualifying exam process. The exam process serves as an opportunity for discussion between the faculty and the student as the student integrates core/specialization classes and academic activities across subject areas and disciplinary approaches. The exam committee, under the leadership of the student's advising chair, writes four questions relevant to the student's class work, career goals, and dissertation agenda. Students are given guidance by the specialization and program faculty to help them prepare for these questions. One question addresses competencies in *research design and methods*. One question addresses the discipline of *public policy* and is written and graded in cooperation with the program faculty who teach the core policy courses. One question addresses *specialization* competencies. An additional question is written by the *specialization faculty and will cover another area* that the committee feels is important; this is often referred to as the wildcard question.   If the quality of the written answers is acceptable, the advising chair will schedule the oral exam with the student's exam committee. Oral exams cover only material from the written exams. Students may be asked to expand on their written responses; however, they may not be asked to cover material that is not addressed in the written exam questions. If the quality of answers is unacceptable, the exam committee shall propose remedies. This may include retaking of portions of the qualifying exam, assigning another written paper, taking an

additional course/independent study, or perhaps, assigning some other option. If the student completes the written and oral portions of the exam, s/he is admitted to Ph.D. candidacy [meeting program goal 3].

The following four PUBP students were admitted to candidacy during 2019:

Frederick Clerson
Alfred Dowe
Erika Gamboa
Richard Moss

Outcomes 4 through 7 are evaluated during dissertation process. Upon admission to candidacy, the student selects a dissertation chair and at least two other committee members. The dissertation chair and committee will direct the student's research so that the project is consistent with the following goals: (1) demonstration of the ability to do independent research; (2) expand upon or "test" theory; (3) contribute to new scholarly/academic knowledge; and (4) contribute to policy relevant knowledge. These goals are also pursued by students through the writing and submission of manuscripts for conference presentation and publication [meeting program goals 1, 2, and 3].

The following six PUBP students defended their dissertations during 2019:

Azaliah Israel
Samantha Julien
Jonathan Langner
Richard Moss
Rachael Moyer
Grant West

During 2019, PUBP students presented 30 papers at professional conferences...up from 22 in 2018!

During 2019, PUBP students published or had accepted for publication 26 peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters…up from 13 in 2018!

During 2019, PUBP graduates were placed in the following jobs:

Director, STEM Success, Pulaski Tech, North Little Rock, AR

Postdoctoral Associate, USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station, AEAD, University of Arkansas, 2020-21

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Arkansas, 2020-23

Timelines for Data Collection and Analysis
(*Specific timeline for collection and analysis of assessment data*.)
Data on capstone projects, admissions to candidacy, dissertation defenses, student conference presentations, student publications, and job placements will be collected for the calendar year. The data analysis will be presented in the PUBP's Annual Academic Assessment Report. The report will be transmitted to the GSIE Dean's Office by May 15 of the following year. Parts of the analysis will be presented/reproduced in the PUBP annual report, which is generally due in the GSIE Dean's Office on July 1.

Use of Results
Feedback from student performance is continuously reviewed by the program administration and is used both to assess individual student performance and to review the program requirements. The results are included in the annual report of the program, submitted to the Graduate School, and in the seven-year program review.