

**Academic Program Assessment Data Report (2017)**  
**Ph.D. degree program in Public Policy (PUBPPH)**  
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**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 2017 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].

**In spring 2017, four PUBP doctoral students, in collaboration with the University of Arkansas Office for Sustainability, conducted a study to better understand how the recycling system on campus could be successfully improved. In order to promote recycling on campus, the University spoke about a goal of Zero Waste by 2021, which means 90% waste diversion from landfills. Since the diversion rates from 2015, are below 30%, this study focused on finding solutions to improve the diversion rate to get closer to targeted 90%. In order to evaluate the awareness and attitudes of students regarding the importance of recycling efforts on campus, the students used an online survey and carried out twelve semi-structured interviews of both students and administrators. The results showed pro-environmental attitudes among students and administrators and the interviewees confirmed that the University should act as a role model for the community (e.g., campus and Fayetteville) regarding recycling. However, the results did not confirm campus-wide awareness of the “Zero Waste” goal. Policy recommendations include the implementation of a top down uniform campus-wide recycling policy that is easy to follow and understand. This study also suggests the improvement of the provided infrastructure for recycling, as well as an increase in education and promotion efforts to raise awareness of the importance of recycling and related campus goals.**

**In fall 2017 there were two capstone teams. One capstone team conducted an analysis of the access of members of the Marshallese community in Northwest Arkansas to quality and affordable health care. With an estimated population of at least 6,000 Marshallese residing in the area, this problem is critical. The unequal access to health care that Marshallese experience stems from exclusion of their legal migrant status from the jurisdiction of government assistance programs and is exacerbated by culturally specific dynamics. In addition, low wages and extended family structure often make individual or family health insurance plans or employer-sponsored insurance inaccessible. Yet, local industry in Arkansas relies heavily on this migrant population as poultry processing labor workforce according to Springdale, Arkansas Mayor Doug Sprouse (D. Sprouse, personal communication, September 22, 2017). This analysis discusses the problem of inadequate health care access for the Marshallese by outlining the cultural, economic, and political components that have impeded health care access. The report identifies the major barriers associated with problems in health care access and explores the problem history of these barriers. The report also presents a stakeholder analysis of individuals and groups critical to the issue and explores symbolic language and artifacts along with their implications for health care policy and the Marshallese community. The conclusion presents policy options and recommendations for addressing different dimensions of the problem.**

**The second fall 2017 capstone team conducted an analysis of the alternative of wind-generated electricity for the City of Fayetteville. The language below is taken from the team’s Executive Summary. The city currently procures approximately 25,000,000 kWh of electricity annually, the majority of which is generated by use of fossil fuels. Fayetteville has created an Energy Action Plan that includes the intention to procure energy for local government usage from 100% renewable sources by 2030. The purpose of this analysis is to identify and evaluate policy options that would help meet municipal electricity demands through the procurement of wind-generated electricity. This report provides a broad-level analysis comparing wind-generated policy options to the status quo by assessing relative efficiency, environmental sustainability, administrative feasibility, and political feasibility. The policy alternatives include the following: The status quo policy involving the procurement of 100% fossil fuel-generated electricity; a utility partnership that facilitates the procurement of wind-generated electricity; and a distributed wind option to self-generate wind-powered electricity.**

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 five PUBP students were admitted to candidacy during 2017:**

**Meredith Adkins**  
**Benton Brown**  
**Azaliah Israel**  
**Samantha Julien**  
**Angela (Ella) Nwude**

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 four PUBP students defended their dissertations during 2017:**

**Roslina Ali  
Kuatbay Bektemirov  
Bryan Hill  
Aisha Kenner**

**During 2017, PUBP students presented 29 papers at professional conferences.**

**During 2017, PUBP students published or had accepted for publication 14 peer-reviewed journal articles.**

**During 2017, PUBP graduates were placed in the following jobs:**

**Assistant Dean, Student Recruitment and Diversity, Honors, and International Programs,  
College of Engineering, University of Arkansas**

**Associate Dean of Students for Inclusion, Division of Student Affairs, University of  
Arkansas**

**Career Data Analyst, University Career Development Center, Division of Student Services,  
University of Arkansas**

**Deputy Director, Economics and Social Science Research Center, Malaysian Agricultural  
Research and Development Institute**

### **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.