



**Docket Item:**

University Program Approval: Portland State University (PSU), B.A./B.S. in Urban and Public Affairs.

**Summary:**

PSU proposes a new degree program leading to a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Urban and Public Affairs. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the program as proposed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following program:

B.A./B.S. in Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, effective Fall 2016.

**Portland State University seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission’s approval to offer an instructional program leading to a B.A./B.S. degree in Urban and Public Affairs.**

1. *Describe the purpose and relationship of the proposed program to the institution’s mission and strategic plan.*

The College of Urban and Public Affairs is ideally situated to offer this new undergraduate major given the breadth and depth of intellectual capacity and interest in urban and public affairs throughout the College. Working together, academic units within the College will provide undergraduates with a more complete understanding of the importance of urban environments, public life, social and governing institutions; the meaning and roles of communities; and the individual’s social responsibility, while exposing them to the critical elements of public engagement, safety, health, and the importance and functions of civic and community leadership. This undergraduate major will help the College and University to promote itself as a resource for students in the Northwest, generating an increasing amount of student enrollment in a topical area that is central to Portland State University’s (PSU) mission. There is a history of collaboration among the academic units across the College that provides the foundation for supporting this new major. This project aligns with the institution’s and College’s mission, signature areas of focus, and strategic priorities to increase undergraduate offerings that naturally build on Portland’s reputation for heightened civic activity as well as that lead to increased interest in the array of graduate programs in the College and University, and beyond.

As stated on the PSU website: “The mission of Portland State University is to enhance the intellectual, social, cultural and economic qualities of urban life by providing access throughout the life-span to a quality liberal education for undergraduates and an appropriate array of professional and graduate programs especially relevant to metropolitan areas.” PSU’s strategic plan seeks to implement this mission. The overarching goals of this proposed academic program are to increase students’ knowledge, skills and awareness concerning urban and public affairs and prepare them for effective, life-long engaged citizenship.

2. *What evidence of need does the institution have for the program?*

The Analysis of Employer Demand in Northern Oregon and Southern Washington (2014, Education Advisory Board, <http://www.pdx.edu/oai/psu-flexible-degrees-resources>) resource provided via the Flexible Degree proposal website clearly identifies “collaboration” as one of the top skills most in demand by Pacific Northwest employers. Collaboration is at the center of the curriculum in each of the (five) partnered academic units that participate in this CUPA-wide degree. Graduates with the major in urban and public affairs will be

positioned well in a rapidly changing market due to the fact that this degree provides students with exposure to a wide variety of disciplines.

Further, the Market Size for Adult Learners Seeking Online Bachelors or Masters Degrees <https://drive.google.com/a/pdx.edu/file/d/0B1h8ignEd4DtVG1MNjBlZmQtYXc/view>, October 2014 report sponsored by PSU estimates that 45% of the overall undergraduate target market has the potential to be addressed by the new undergraduate degree in urban and public affairs. Target market breakdowns include: 13% social science and criminal justice; 13% health and medicine; 10% education; and 9 % human services and social work.

This program will attract four main categories of students: students who have been away from PSU undergraduate studies for one or more terms and are re-enrolling; transfer students; students who have not decided on a major; and, students specifically interested in the subject matter of the degree. Part-time and working students, who have challenging schedules, will also be drawn to this major. As the Portland metropolitan region continues to grow (Metro is predicting a 56-74% increase in number of households by 2035 in the metropolitan region) the pool of potential students will also increase.

The College of Urban & Public Affairs (CUPA), similar to the University as a whole, has many students who start their undergraduate education in one of our disciplines but fail to earn a bachelor's degree from our College. In recent years, 18% of undergraduate students who are newly declared CUPA majors fail to return for a second term, 26% are lost before their third term, 36% have left our College by their fourth term, and by their eighth term, 51% of our one-time majors have left CUPA without earning a degree from one of our programs.

CUPA's largest losses result from students who drop out of PSU altogether (40% by eighth term). Some of these students may be transferring to other institutions, but many more often drop out of school altogether. Some of those former CUPA students will likely be drawn to this flexible degree program.

Further, as mentioned earlier, there is a quiet crisis emerging due to both demographic trends impacting public-sector leadership and an increasing demand for and limited availability of programs that can educate leaders. This has led some researchers to predict a "leadership gap," especially in the public and nonprofit sectors. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted a replacement gap starting in 2006 and continuing through baby boomer retirement years, stating: "There will be...151 million jobs in the U.S. economy and 141 million people in the workforce to fill them. Across all sectors, but especially in the public sector, the greatest turnover in aging workers will be in executive and managerial occupations." (Monthly Labor Review <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/07/art2full.pdf>)

3. *Are there similar programs in the state? If so, how does the proposed program supplement, complement, or collaborate with those programs?*

In the Oregon public higher education system there are two distantly related undergraduate programs of study: (a) at Eastern Oregon University (EOU) there is a Small City and Rural County Management Program that is both private and public sector focused; and (b) the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management (PPPM) at the University of Oregon (UO) offers an undergraduate major for students interested in public or nonprofit careers. It should be noted that the size of both of these programs is small. The breadth and depth of this proposed degree program, its intentionally flexible nature, and its intended target group all suggest that it will not compete with the EOU and UO programs. The much wider range of choice among career-related fields, together with the ability to go into more depth in one of those fields, the required seminar that addresses explicitly areas of integration, and the intended target group for the degree program, all suggest that the Urban and Public Affairs degree is different than and won't compete with the EOU and UO programs.

The UO also offers courses in Portland in urban design, urban theory, and urban development by experts in the field. The UO faculty in Portland are considering a Master of Urban Design program in the future with possible collaboration with PSU.

In terms of private institutions in the Portland Metropolitan area, Willamette University's College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and Atkinson Graduate School of Management (AGSM) offer a combined degree program (B.A./M.B.A.) which allows eligible Willamette University CLA students to complete the B.A. degree and M.B.A. degree in five years. The B.A./M.B.A. program gives students the opportunity to pursue their interest in business, government and not-for-profit management while obtaining a liberal arts education, and provides a fast track for completion of the master degree. This degree is predominately business/private sector focused. The University of Portland (UP) offers a B.A. in environmental ethics and policy, an interdisciplinary degree designed to provide students with a firm foundation in environmental science and ecology and the influence these sciences have on the development of policy, environmental ethics, and recent theological reformulation within the Judeo-Christian tradition. While there are some curricular overlaps, the UP major is specifically focused on environmental science and ecology. Neither program provides the kind of focus on urban and public affairs which is the hallmark of this proposed program.

### ***Recommendation to the Commission***

The Statewide Provosts Council recommends that the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission authorize Portland State University to establish an instructional program leading to a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Urban and Public Affairs, effective Fall 2016.

**Institution:** Portland State University  
**Program:** B.A./B.S. in Urban and Public Affairs

Action: At the June 2, 2016 meeting, the Statewide Provosts Council approved a new program for Portland State University, B.A./B.S. in Urban and Public Affairs, to move forward to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission for its review/approval. The PSU Board of Trustees approved it at their May 11, 2016 meeting.

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**Eastern Oregon University**

Sarah Witte, interim provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Health & Science University**

Jenny Mladenovic, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon State University**

Sabah Randhawa, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Tech**

Brad Burda, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained

*Absence from meeting*

**Portland State University**

Sona Andrews, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Southern Oregon University**

Susan Walsh, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**University of Oregon**

Scott Coltrane, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Western Oregon University**

Steve Scheck, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained

