

# **Curricular Programs and Philosophies in Public Administration: A Regional Perspective**

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*A lot remains to be planned and done to effectively achieve Public Administration education program goals in the Ilocos Region and Cordillera Administrative Region. To prospective Masters of Public Administration (MPA) students, what may be of paramount importance are matters of curriculum, faculty expertise, tuition, and financial aid; to the prospective MPA faculty, questions of faculty reputation, teaching loads, research opportunities, salary, cost of living, and desirability of location may be of greater importance; and to the prospective employer, those involving program strengths, program emphasis, and general reputation may be more weighty. Also discussed are issues on the quality of MPA students, attraction and retention of quality faculty, moral and financial support from the academic administration, relevance, professionalism and professional ethics in public administration, and low graduation rates. Finally, eight recommendations are offered for consideration by the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines, Inc. in assisting its member institutions in appropriate collaborative undertakings.*

## **Introduction**

This paper adopts the meaning of "curriculum" as the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations, and values under the auspices of educational institutions (Doll 1982). The first part dwells on the different curricular programs in Public Administration/Management currently offered in the different colleges and universities in Region I (Ilocos Region) and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). Although the term "philosophies" has been couched into the title of this paper, no attempt in the second part will be made to venture into a spirited discussion on the various "isms" of educational philosophy such as traditionalism, progressivism, idealism, Marxism, etc. Simple philosophical reflections focus only on the specific goals of the Master of Public Administration/Master of Management (MPA/MM) program. The second part addresses current problems and issues in public administration/management as perceived in a regional perspective. Finally, the last part offers some general and specific suggestions for possible consideration by the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines, Inc. (ASPAP).

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### Curricular Programs in Public Administration/ Management (PA/M) in Region I and CAR

A recent nationwide study found four distinct categorizations of PA/M programs in the Philippines, namely: pure programs such as Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Arts in Public Administration (MAPA), Master of Government Management (MGM); joint or mixed PA and BA programs such as Master in Public and Business Administration (MPBA), Master of Management (MM) major in Public Management (PM) or Business Management (BM), and Educational Management (EdM); specialist programs such as Master of Arts in Education major in Public Administration, Master of Public Administration major in Hospital Administration and Master in Fiscal Studies; and, universalist Programs such as Master in Management and Master in Organization Development and Planning (Ocampo and Tancangco 1985).

In the Ilocos Region and CAR, three private colleges/universities and three state universities currently offer graduate programs in Public Administration/Management which may be classified into pure programs, joint or mixed programs or universalist programs, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Curricular Programs in Public Administration/  
Management Offered in Region I and CAR**

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Program Category</i>	<i>Specific Program</i>
Univ. of Northern Phil (Vigan)	I	Pure	MPA (Gov'tal Mgt.)
St. Louis College (SFLU*)	I	Pure	MPA
Luzon Colleges (Dagupan)	I	Universalist	MPA (Org. & Dev't)
M. Marcos State Univ. (Batac)	I	Pure	MPA and MAPA
Baguio Central Univ.	CAR	Pure	MPA
UP College Baguio	CAR	Joint	MM (BM, PM, EdM)

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The MPA programs of the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) and the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and the MM program of the University of the Philippines College Baguio (UPCB) require a comprehensive examination without a thesis. The MPA programs of St. Louis College (SLC), Luzon Colleges at Dagupan, and Baguio Central University (BCU) as well as UNP's MAPA require both the comprehensive examination and the masters thesis. UPCB's Master of Management program is administered by a separate department called the Management Sciences Division while all the other programs are combined with other graduate programs administered by the graduate school of the institution concerned.

The curricular structures of the different MPA/MM programs in CAR and Region I, similar to the findings of Ocampo and Tancangco, vary in terms of the number of

units required for basic courses, major courses, electives and cognates. A summary of the features of the "pure" curricular programs is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Unit Requirements of Pure MPA Programs in Region I and CAR**

	SLC	Number of Units		
		BCU	UNP	MMSU
Basic/Core Course	9	15	9	9
Major Courses	15	15	24	18
Electives	6	—	—	—
Cognates	—	—	9	6
Thesis	9	6	—	6
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39*</b>

\*For the MAPA thesis program, a total of 39 units is required but for the MPA, one additional cognate subject and one additional major course are required in lieu of the thesis to complete 45 units.

Three schools, SLC, UNP and MMSU have the same basic course requirements: Statistics in Research, Research Methodology, and Theory and Practice of Public Administration or Philosophy of Public Administration. In the case of BCU, it requires 15 units, 9 of which are the same subjects as those required by the other three colleges plus Public Fiscal Administration and Seminar in Governmental Management.

For the major courses, all the colleges/universities allow the students to choose from a list of options until they complete the required number of units. This practice is also done for electives or cognates.

The joint MM program offered by UPCB and other UP regional units is unique in the sense that aside from the fact that it is a comprehensive examination program requiring only 36 academic units, it offers three common courses for the three major specializations under it (i.e., BM, PM, and EdM). This is displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3. Unit Requirements of the MM Program Offered by UPCB and Other UP Regional Units**

	BM	Number of Units	
		PM	EdM
Common Courses	9	9	9
Specialized Courses	24	18	21
Electives	3	9*	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>

\*In AY 1986-87, the 9 units required for PM was changed to 6 and the slashed 3 was added to the 18 units required for the specialized courses, making a total of 21 units. Specifically, the added specialized course is "Theory and Practice of Public Administration."

The three common courses required for BM, PM, and EdM are: Statistical Methods in Administration, Human Behavior in Organization, and Ecology of Administration/Philippine Business Environment.

### **Program Goals of PA/M in the Philippines**

#### *Program Goals*

A major chunk of Public Administration in the Philippines is said to be "Americanized" through the importation of the once referred to as "bastard" discipline to the archipelago at the then Institute of Public Administration. The Institute later became the UP College of Public Administration (UPCPA) and adopted the program goals of American Public Administration/Management education as its own (Cariño 1990). Evidently, the regions were not spared from American influence inasmuch as most of our local scholars or professors of Public Administration were sent to the University of the Philippines for their training/education. So great is the influence of UPCPA in the regions that most, if not all, of the course nomenclatures used by other schools were adopted from the UP curricular programs, different only in course numberings.

Public Administration/Management program goals whether American or Filipino, may be grouped into three distinct categories: program maintenance goals, classroom/educational goals, and long-range goals (Baldwin 1988). The program maintenance goals include the following: attracting quality students to the program, securing financial resources from the administration, attracting quality faculty, developing the MPA program, placing the students in internships, and retaining quality faculty.

The following are considered classroom/educational goals for students: providing practical skills, instilling a sense of professionalism, providing theoretical frameworks, developing appreciation for the history and tradition of the field, providing analytic skills, and instilling professional ethics.

Long-range goals include: encouraging students to complete their degrees, placing pre-service students in jobs, maintaining standards of entry into the profession, providing in-service students a means for promotion or a better job, and providing the appropriate supply of labor to the community.

#### *Importance of MPA Program Goals*

As an empirical basis for the present and subsequent topics, some 80 short questionnaires were sent to faculty members, heads/deans of MPA programs, graduates of MPA/MM courses, and MPA students in Regions I and CAR representing UPCB, BCU, LC, SLC, UNP, and MMSU in March 1990. The two-page questionnaire asked for only three things: to indicate the importance of each of the aforementioned

goals on a 1 to 5 scale, to indicate the effectiveness of the MPA/MM programs, also on a 1 to 5 scale, and to identify the most relevant and most irrelevant PA/M courses from a given list. Fortunately, by the second week of April 1990, some 53 accomplished questionnaires, representing 66% of 80 sent by mail, were already retrieved. The 53 retrieved questionnaires revealed that 11 of the respondents are faculty members/deans or heads teaching MPA/MM courses, 23 are MPA graduates in Region I and CAR, and 19 are currently enrolled in MPA/MM programs.

In Table 4, the importance of MPA/MM program goals as perceived by its faculty, graduates or alumni, and students is reflected. Note at the bottom of Table 4 that the overall mean importance of the program goals by respondents' status are not significantly different (4.26 for MPA/MM faculty, 4.35 for MPA graduates and 4.41 for MPA students). This means that there seems to be an agreement among the three respondent groups as to the importance of the cited program goals. It is interesting to deduce from Table 4 that when the 18 specific MPA/MM program goals are compared, it appears that the most important goal is the third in the list: attracting quality faculty, while the least important is goal number 5, i.e., placing students in internships, as evidenced by the general weighted average of 4.74 for goal number 3 and 3.49 for goal number 5. It is important to mention that the last program goal in the list, contributing to local/regional planning and development, was personally added to Baldwin's list in order to stress the local/regional perspective. In fact, it tied with goal 11, i.e., providing students analytic skills, in garnering the second highest rating in importance (4.72).

### **Effectiveness in Achieving MPA/MM Program Goals**

#### *By Respondent Status*

That the present state of MPA/MM programs in terms of effectiveness in goal achievement is no longer as rosy as the perceived importance of the program goals is evident in Table 5. Data in Table 5 suggest that, overall, the various MPA/MM programs in the region under study are most ineffective in "placing the pre-service students in jobs" (GWA=2.77). The low performance in placing students in internships may be due to the general absence of internship requirement among the different schools offering graduate programs in PA/M. Those who are already in the public service while pursuing their MPA/MM degrees, enjoy the bright prospect of getting a promotion or a better job after graduation (GWA=3.74, see goal no. 16) but for those who are still unemployed after completing an MPA/MM course, possessing a graduate degree in Public Administration/Management could hardly help them in getting a job. This may not necessarily be due to the unattractiveness of MPA/MM graduates to the employers, but to the unemployment problem of the country that is still increasingly becoming more severe in magnitude.

**Table 4. Importance of MPA Program Goals by Respondent Status**

<i>MPA Program Goals</i>	<i>(N=53)</i>	<i>Respondent Status</i>			<i>GWA*</i>
		<i>MPA Faculty (n=11)</i>	<i>MPA Graduate (n=23)</i>	<i>MPA Student (n=9)</i>	
<i>Program Maintenance Goals</i>					
1. Attracting quality students to the program		4.54	4.26	4.74	4.49
2. Securing financial resources from the administration		4.36	3.70	3.95	3.92
3. Attracting quality faculty		4.45	4.78	4.84	4.74
4. Developing the MPA program		4.63	4.48	4.49	4.62
5. Placing students in internship		3.45	3.61	3.37	3.49
6. Retaining quality faculty		4.00	4.78	4.56	4.54
<i>Classroom / Educational Goals</i>					
7. Providing students practical skills		4.36	4.56	4.05	4.34
8. Instilling a sense of professionalism among students		4.45	4.00	4.89	4.42
9. Providing students theoretical frameworks		4.27	4.65	4.79	4.62
10. Developing student appreciation for the history & tradition of the field		3.27	4.43	4.74	4.72
11. Providing students analytic skills		4.54	4.74	4.74	4.53
12. Instilling a sense of professional ethics among students		4.54	4.61	4.63	4.60
<i>Long-range Goals</i>					
13. Graduating students		4.82	4.17	4.37	4.38
14. Placing pre-service students in job		3.54	3.74	3.42	3.58
15. Maintaining standards of entry into the profession		4.09	4.61	4.53	4.47
16. Providing in-service students a means for promotion/better job		4.54	4.17	3.89	4.15
17. Providing the appropriate supply of labor to the community		4.18	4.30	4.32	4.28
18. Contributing to local/regional planning and development		4.73	4.65	4.79	4.72
Index		76.76	78.24	79.41	78.61
Overall Mean		4.26	4.35	4.41	4.37

\* GWA - General Weighted Average of each goal

Table 5 also reflects that the MPA/MM programs in the countryside are most effective in "providing students theoretical frameworks" (goal no. 9) and in "providing the student analytic skills" (goal no. 11), both with general weighted effectiveness ratings slightly above 4 on a 5-point scale.

**Table 5. Effectiveness in Achieving MPA Program Goals by Respondent Status**

MPA Program Goals (N=53)	Respondent Status			GWA
	MPA Faculty (n=11)	MPA Graduate (n=23)	MPA Student (n=9)	
<i>Program Maintenance Goals</i>				
1. Attracting quality students to the program	3.18	3.52	3.95	3.60
2. Securing financial resources from the administration	3.09	2.96	3.32	3.11
3. Attracting quality faculty	3.27	3.61	4.00	3.77
4. Developing the MPA program	3.09	3.87	4.16	3.81
5. Placing students in internship	1.80	2.17	3.21	2.66
6. Retaining quality faculty	3.00	3.48	3.24	3.47
<i>Classroom/Educational Goals</i>				
7. Providing students practical skills	3.00	3.56	4.00	3.60
8. Instilling a sense of professionalism among students	3.00	3.78	4.42	3.85
9. Providing students theoretical frameworks	3.27	4.13	4.42	4.06
10. Developing student appreciation for the history & tradition of the field	3.36	3.96	4.00	3.85
11. Providing students analytic skills	3.45	3.96	4.42	4.02
12. Instilling a sense of professional ethics among students	2.73	3.83	4.16	3.72
<i>Long-range Goals</i>				
13. Graduating students	3.27	3.78	4.26	3.85
14. Placing pre-service students in job	2.36	2.83	2.95	2.77
15. Maintaining standards of entry into the profession	3.18	3.61	3.68	3.55
16. Providing in-service students a means for promotion/better job	4.18	3.26	4.05	3.74
17. Providing the appropriate supply of labor to the community	3.27	3.78	3.95	3.74
18. Contributing to local/regional planning and development	3.09	3.70	4.10	3.72
Index	55.59	63.79	70.29	64.89
Overall Mean	3.09	3.54	3.90	3.51

When the overall means are compared by respondent status, an interesting observation is revealed, i.e., that currently enrolled MPA students tend to give higher MPA program goal effectiveness ratings than the MPA/MM graduates as well as MPA/MM faculty; and that the faculty members tend to give the lowest effectiveness ratings. The overall mean for MPA faculty is only 3.09 compared to the 3.54 for MPA/MM graduates and to 3.90 to MPA/MM students. As shown in Table 5.1, the differences between the respondent groups in their effectiveness ratings are highly significant.

**Table 5.1. Effectiveness in Achieving MPA Program Goals by Respondent Status (One Way ANOVA)**

<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>D.F.*</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F Ratio</i>	<i>Probability</i>
Between	6.029	2	3.015	13.775	1.648E-05
Within	11.161	51	.219		
Total	17.191	53			

\* Degrees of Freedom

Overall, the regional colleges and universities offering graduate programs in Public Administration/Management have not been very successful in achieving their program maintenance goals and long-range goals. There is, therefore, a wide room for improvement in performance, with more vigorous assistance from ASPAP and more importantly, from the administration of the schools concerned.

#### *By Type of School*

Of the fifty-three respondents, 36 represent a school whose MPA/MM program is administered by a separate department while 17 come from schools whose MPA/MM programs are administered, along with other programs, by the graduate school. Based on the type of MPA school, the effectiveness ratings were reprocessed, and the resulting data are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that MPA/MM programs administered totally by separate departments/divisions/colleges with faculty and administrative personnel of its own as well as separate budget seem to be more effective in achieving their program goals than MPA/MM programs administered by a combined graduate school. This conclusion may not be definitive inasmuch as the sample sizes used were small, but the overall means of 4.03 for separate department and 2.87 for combined school is statistically highly significant when a test of difference between two means is applied (the computed value of the Z-statistics came out 11.32 which far exceeded the critical value of 2.58!).

#### *Relevant and Most Irrelevant MPA/MM Courses*

The third and the last question in the survey specifically asked the respondents to identify, from a list of all the MPA/MM courses under the different regional programs, the most relevant and the most irrelevant ones.



**Table 6. Effectiveness in Achieving MPA Program Goals by Type of School**

<i>MPA Program Goals (N=53)</i>	<i>Type of MPA School</i>	
	<i>Separate Department (n=36)</i>	<i>Combined Gr. School (n=17)</i>
<i>Program Maintenance Goals</i>		
1. Attracting quality students to the program	3.92	2.76
2. Securing financial resources from the administration	3.75	3.00
3. Attracting quality faculty	4.00	3.80
4. Developing the MPA program	4.00	3.00
5. Placing students in internship	2.92	2.35
6. Retaining quality faculty	4.00	2.76
<i>Classroom/Educational Goals</i>		
7. Providing students practical skills	4.11	2.76
8. Instilling a sense of professionalism among students	4.39	2.76
9. Providing students theoretical frameworks	4.56	3.00
10. Developing student appreciation for the history & tradition of the field	4.56	3.12
11. Providing students analytic skills	4.53	3.00
12. Instilling a sense of professional ethics among students	4.31	2.88
<i>Long-range Goals</i>		
13. Graduating students	4.28	2.94
14. Placing pre-service students in job	2.94	2.29
15. Maintaining standards of entry into the profession	4.06	2.59
16. Providing in-service students a means for promotion/better job	4.00	3.18
17. Providing the appropriate supply of labor to the community	4.08	3.35
18. Contributing to local/regional planning and development	4.08	2.71
Index	72.49	51.63
Overall Mean	4.03	2.87
Standard Deviation	0.46	0.28

The tabulated data showed that from the point of view of MPA/MM graduates the "most relevant" courses most frequently identified are: first, Human Behavior in Organization; second, Organization and Management; and, third, Seminar in Governmental Management. From the perception of the MPA faculty, the most relevant courses are: first, Human Behavior in Organization; second, Theory and Practice of Public Administration; and, third, Public Personnel Administration. Interestingly, the students currently enrolled rated Public Fiscal Administration as number one, Human Behavior in Organization number 2 and Administration of Rural Development number 3, for relevance.

For the most irrelevant course offerings, the MPA/MM alumni considered Statistical Methods in Public Administration as the most irrelevant, Administrative

Communications as the second most irrelevant, and Research Methods in Public Administration as the third most irrelevant. From the perspective of the faculty, the rank-order of the most irrelevant courses is as follows: one, Statistical Methods; second, Administrative Communications; and, third, Ecology of Administration.

The overall ranking of the "most relevant" and the "most irrelevant" MPA/MM courses is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Most Relevant and Most Irrelevant MPA/MM Courses**

<i>Most Relevant</i>	<i>Most Irrelevant</i>
1. Human Behavior in Organization (19)	1. Statistical Methods (17)
2. Theory and Practice of PA (16)	2. Administrative Communications(11)
3. Organization & Management (15)	3. Research Methods (9)

It appears that courses with quantitative content like Statistics and Research Methods tend to be perceived as irrelevant. There were, however, 16 who did not identify any irrelevant course and 3 who did not mention any relevant subject.

### **Problems and Issues**

Based on the findings of the mini-survey presented and discussed in this paper, the following issues/problems are raised for further discussion in this conference:

#### *MPA/MM Program Maintenance*

One thesis around which this paper has been developed is that graduate programs in PA/M especially in the regions outside the National Capital Region (NCR) have not been very successful in attracting quality students to the programs, securing financial resources from the academic administration, developing the MPA program, placing students in internships, and attracting and retaining quality faculty.

*Quality of students.* Not only MPA/MM faculty, but also the better students think that there are many students who should not be in the program. An issue that can be raised is: how could we attract quality students into the program? Should the policy of selective admission, through an entrance examination and interview, be strictly enforced? Can the private colleges and universities afford to strictly screen their graduate students when the profit motive is uppermost in their objectives?

*Moral and financial support from the academic administration.* If we scrutinize how much is actually being spent for PA/M programs in relation to total expenditures, we could reasonably estimate the importance our school administrators actually attach to them. One faculty respondent from a private college in Region I wrote: "Most MPA instructors especially in private schools need a lot more help from our administrators.

Most of the private school administrators do not see any profitable future for the MPA program, hence their apathy....” The problem of insufficient moral and financial support could even be worse in the case of state colleges and universities since they have to compete with other government institutions and programs in getting scarce resources. How important really are our MPA programs before the eyes of school administrators?

*Quality of faculty and the issue of retention.* A faculty member of a state college in Region I commented that most professors teaching MPA courses are not Public Administration graduates. They are mostly graduates of educational management and agricultural education.

Perhaps, one reason why most MPA/MM programs could hardly attract quality faculty to teach full-time is the unattractive salaries and absence of fringe benefits such as housing and other appropriate allowances which are all necessary in attracting and retaining top-caliber faculty. As a result, the more qualified people simply opt to teach part-time or act as lecturers. A related issue is “what is the optimum combination of full-time and part-time faculty?”

*The issue of relevance.* The concerns for developing the MPA program and placing students in internship appropriately fall under the issue of relevance, for the main objective for curricular changes/development and internship program is to make the curriculum attuned to the changing needs of the times.

The PA/M academic program would be deemed relevant if it meets the educational needs for developing administrators equipped with the necessary perspective, knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to perform their various roles (De Guzman 1972). How could we achieve such relevance? In comprehensive MPA programs that do not require a thesis, should we still continue requiring statistics and research as basic requirements? Should a diploma course be offered to answer the needs of those who are not keen at finishing the MPA degree program?

*The issue of professionalism and professional ethics*

Amid the rampant graft and corruption committed by highly “educated” government officials and administrators, a situation which causes cognitive dissonance among our students, how could we effectively instill a sense of professionalism and professional ethics in the government service? If we have to formalize the offering of ethics for public administrators, what should be the goals of ethics education then? What ethical standards ought to serve as a basic content of an administrative ethics course? What kind of ethical decisionmaking process should be used by ethics instructors to help cultivate the moral judgment of their students (Hejka-Ekins 1988)?

*Low graduation rate*

In the case of UPCB, for example, during AY 1988-89, 4 out of an average enrolment of 17.5 graduated, representing a 22.9% graduation rate. In 1989-90, the

graduation rate went down to 10% (3 graduated out of 30 enrolled). The case of SLC in San Fernando, La Union, is even worse. One out of 63 and one out of 100 graduated in AY 1988-89 and 1989-90, respectively.

What are the reasons behind the very low graduation rates? What could be done to improve the picture? Are most of our MPA students satisfied in completing the minimum number of units required by the Civil Service Commission for promotion purposes?

### Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that ASPAP assist the regional units or schools of Public Administration/Management in the following areas:

- (1) Periodic program review of existing curricula for possible revisions to make them more relevant;
- (2) Faculty development through more fellowship grants;
- (3) Production of more indigenous materials for use in PA/M classes such as cases, textbooks, and readings;
- (4) Sharing of library and faculty resources;
- (5) Setting up an effective internship program;
- (6) Collaborative research undertakings;
- (7) More frequent dialogues, conferences and seminars;
- (8) Exploration of possible sources of financial support; and,
- (9) Indigenization through the use of the national language as a medium of instruction.

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