



## Joint Doctoral Program in Public Policy and Administration

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The MPA faculty submitted a strategic planning impact proposal to create a joint doctoral program in public policy and administration. It was deferred for further consideration by the DAC. We devoted our meeting on September 23 to a dialogue with David Ammons and Carl Stenberg about the proposal, and then the MPA faculty considered the proposal at a meeting on October 5. The DAC met on October 7 and, after hearing a report from Carl Stenberg about the MPA faculty meeting, concluded that we should not proceed with the joint doctoral program. I agree completely with that decision, and so we will not partner with the Department of Public Policy to create a doctoral program at the School.

This proposal has a long history and I won't recount all of it. It started with the idea of creating our own doctoral program, and David Ammons did a wonderful job of developing a strong proposal. For a variety of reasons the University ultimately declined to create a new doctoral program and suggested that we explore a partnership with Public Policy. David and Carl have worked closely with faculty in Public Policy to develop the current proposal, and I think they fashioned the best possible arrangement under the circumstances.

The bottom line is that the School does not have, and will not receive, adequate resources to support the proposed doctoral program. The DAC identified other potential concerns—the specific degree requirements and questions about whether the governance structure would give the School sufficient control over the proposed public administration track—but the deciding factor for me was resources.

I believe that we would need at least three new faculty positions to adequately cover existing MPA courses and new doctoral courses—plus doctoral admissions, dissertation committees, and critically important and intensive mentoring. One reason we would need so many positions is because new faculty would be required to split their time between the doctoral program and working with public officials. I am unwilling to create faculty positions at the School that focus exclusively on degree-seeking students and that have no connection with the rest of our mission. The extra faculty time is likely to come at the expense of work with the MPA Program and existing work with public officials. The other resource requirement would be funding for doctoral students, which could require slightly more than \$100,000 per year. We do not have enough funding now to support our MPA students. The MPA faculty (core MPA faculty and other SOG faculty who teach in the program) was divided after their meeting—a number concluded that “[w]hile seeing the prospective benefits to the School



and MPA program, in the short-term the impact of the Doctoral initiative could at worst decrease client service and dilute the core Masters experience.” Without a strong consensus for moving forward among the MPA faculty, it makes no sense to proceed with the joint program.

The MPA Program rankings emerged as a serious concern during the course of the DAC’s conversation about the doctoral program. The relevant *US News* category is “Public Affairs,” which for Carolina collectively includes Public Policy, City & Regional Planning, and the MPA Program—the first two units already have doctoral programs. Carolina is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> overall in the public affairs category with a score of 3.7. The problem is that 11 schools are tied for 14<sup>th</sup>, and the next rank is 25<sup>th</sup> with a score of 3.6. It would not take much for us to experience a dramatic drop in the rankings. Like it or not, the rankings are an important factor in attracting MPA students and we must pay attention to them. I have asked Carl Stenberg to develop a strategy for improving our *US News* rankings, which may need to include a collaborative marketing campaign with Public Policy and City & Regional Planning. The rankings in the public affairs category are entirely subjective based on the impressions of peers across the country. It also may be possible to secure some of the benefits of the proposed joint doctoral program through closer collaboration with Public Policy. For example, we might work with them to jointly recruit doctoral students who would work on funded projects with our faculty. We will be exploring these and other opportunities with Public Policy in the coming weeks.

I again want to thank David Ammons and Carl Stenberg for all of their hard work on the joint proposal. If you are interested in more background, here is a [questions-and-answers document](#) about the initiative that was prepared by Carl. Please feel free to ask me any questions or make any comments about this decision.