Expected Outcomes: Knowledge of literature

When they complete the PhD coursework, students will have attained knowledge of the critical and relevant literature in broad fields of PA and/or Public Policy.

Assessment methods

Method: Written general comprehensive exams

Once students have completed all of their coursework, students take a comprehensive exam covering the core (4 required courses) and track (3 required courses). 3 faculty members grade each exam, utilizing a rubric to rate each student’s answer. One standard for the rubric is the knowledge (depth and breadth) of critical literature. The rubric is scored on a 1-5 scale and a “3” is considered passing, and the graders scores are averaged. This assessment method began in Spring 2010 to more closely track the achievements of the PhD students. Comps are now given in the spring and fall of each academic year.

Findings:

In 2011-2012, 12 students were given comprehensive examinations for the first time. 8 of 12 passed all section on their first attempt. 2 subsequently passed in Spring 2012 and an additional student passed on his second attempt. 2 more will retake the exam in Fall 2012. For the Core questions, 12 of 12 students attained at least a “3” or “adequate” on the knowledge of literature standard. The average scores for literature in the core courses ranged between 3 and 4.5, with an overall average of 3.5. For the PA track questions, 7 of 7 students (including 1 retake) attained at least a “3” on the knowledge of literature standard, with a range between 3.22 and 4.5. The Policy track exams were a different story. Only 2 of 6 students attained above a 3 on the literature assessment, with a range between 2.39 and 3.6.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The faculty are happy with the results of the Core and PA track exams. The policy track exam shows continued problems in the Policy areas -- the results were no improvement over dismal results in 2010-11. It could be that the policy literatures are too disparate to be combined into a single day’s exam. The faculty will discuss these problems, and proposals to change the policy track structure and exams in spring 2013.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Critical and Creative Responses

When they complete the PhD coursework, students will have the ability to critically and creatively respond to questions in the field of Public Administration and Public Policy.

Assessment methods

Method: Written general comprehensive exams

Once students have completed all of their coursework, students take a comprehensive exam
covering the core (4 required courses) and track (3 required courses). 3 faculty members grade each exam, utilizing a rubric to rate each student's answer. One standard for the rubric is the knowledge (depth and breadth) of critical literature. The rubric is scored on a 1-5 scale and a “3” is considered passing, and the graders scores are averaged. This assessment method began in Spring 2010 to more closely track the achievements of the PhD students. Comps are now given in the spring and fall of each academic year.

Findings:

For the Core questions, 9 of 12 students attained at least a “3” or “adequate” score on their ability to answer questions critically and creatively. The average score was 3.25, with a range between 2.67 and 4. For the Policy Track questions, 4 of 6 students attained at least a “3” on their ability to answer questions critically and creatively. The average score was 3.11, with a range between 2.61 and 3.43. For the PA Track, 6 of 7 (includes one re-take) students attained at least a 3 on this indicator. The average was 3.56, with a range between 2.9 and 4.81.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Primarily, students score slightly lower on the ability to synthesize literature than they do on literature recall. However, we still see difficulty with the policy track, with the average barely above adequate. We will continue to discuss ways to improve performance in the policy track.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes : Attain Employment

When they complete the PhD, students who are not already employed in their field of study will be able to successfully gain employment in the areas of PA and Public Policy.

Assessment methods

Method : Attain Employment

Students progress through the PHD program, from courses, comps, and oral exams through dissertation defenses and subsequent employment are beginning to be tracked. This is complicated by the administrative nature of the program (shifting locations of program administration, loss of continuity every three years of record-keeping and assessment and two campuses). For this standard, however, we have recorded this information for the last year. We have identified our graduates from fall 2011, spring 2012, and summer 2012 and coded whether they have retained or received employment in the field.

Findings:

We graduated 6 PhDs last academic year. Of these, 1 is a tenure track asst. professor at Villanova Univ. 1 is a tenure track asst. professor at Troy University 1 returned to her native country to seek employment 1 stayed in her previous employment The last 2 are actively seeking academic jobs.

How did you use findings for improvement?

This is the largest group of students on the academic job market that we have had at one time for many years. Placing 2 in tenure track positions in a dismal job market is very good. Of the two actively looking for jobs, 1 has had several interviews and it is just a matter of time. Given that we are pushing for higher quality students and more research oriented program, attracting more academic minded students is one of our goals. We set up a placement
assistance process last year. We also are setting aside a pool of money for graduate students to apply for conferences with, and pushing research, conference presentations and journal article production as the primary ways to enhance our PhDs' job opportunities. We also have set aside money to send one gifted student to ICPSR (statistical training institute) each summer, which enhances abilities and their cv.

Additional comments:

None