

Strategic Plan
Flagship Agenda for the LSU MPA Program 2020
Public Administration Institute
Louisiana State University

1. Introduction

Since its inception in 1974, the Public Administration Institute (PAI) has graduated over 600 MPA students who have gone on to manage, lead, and excel in the public service. Indeed, the quality of state and local governance in Louisiana has improved significantly over the last 40 years and this improvement corresponds with the infusion of LSU MPA graduates. The PAI accomplished this feat with a small yet excellent faculty, which has also built an impressive research record. National recognition of the LSU MPA program has increased with the program moving up in national rankings in *US News & World Report* from 92nd in 2004 to 57th in 2008.

The PAI seeks to further enhance the quality of its program. It does so in a rapidly changing institutional context. Its faculty has changed and, we believe, improved each time as a result; the NASPAA peer accreditation process has been completed with the LSU PAI receiving full accreditation for seven years as of July 22, 2010. The PAI faculty with the full support of the E. J. Ourso College of Business will maintain its focus on a MPA program that provides outstanding graduates for state and local government in Louisiana, for other state and local governments, for the federal government, and for nonprofit organizations, and one that brings national recognition to the State and LSU.

To help guide this process of change and further improvement, the PAI faculty has been actively engaged in a strategic planning process. Taking into account the previous “Strategic Plan 2010” (completed in 2002 and attached to this document) and the findings of the 2009/2010 NASPAA accreditation committees, PAI faculty have evaluated its instructional program, its research productivity, its public service activities, and its contributions to the community and profession and has put together a strategic plan that will allow it to move forward with purpose and focus. The Strategic Plan contains the overall philosophy and mission, an institutional self-portrait, metric-based goals, accompanying strategies, including an assessment of market opportunities for academic and continuing education programs, growth potential, partnerships within the University structure, and a plan integrated with and complementary

to the university flagship agenda for 2020. The LSU MPA is a central part of LSU's commitment to the state of Louisiana and the University's long-term commitment to national prominence.

This plan is necessarily a "living document" which records PAI's ambitions and plans. It will be periodically revisited and revised in light of new opportunities and institutional changes. The PAI is committed to continually revisiting its processes and procedures in an attempt to retain and enhance its programs and stellar reputation in the field.

2. Overview (history of the institute, organization, curriculum, research)

The state of Louisiana, with a population of almost 4.5 million, possesses a rich diversity of peoples and cultures. No other state has a more varied or colorful past or offers such a unique "cultural gumbo" than Louisiana. The flagship institution of the state, Louisiana State University, embodies and celebrates that cultural diversity. The PAI embodies this same cultural diversity in terms of student body, faculty, and serving the profession and people of Louisiana.

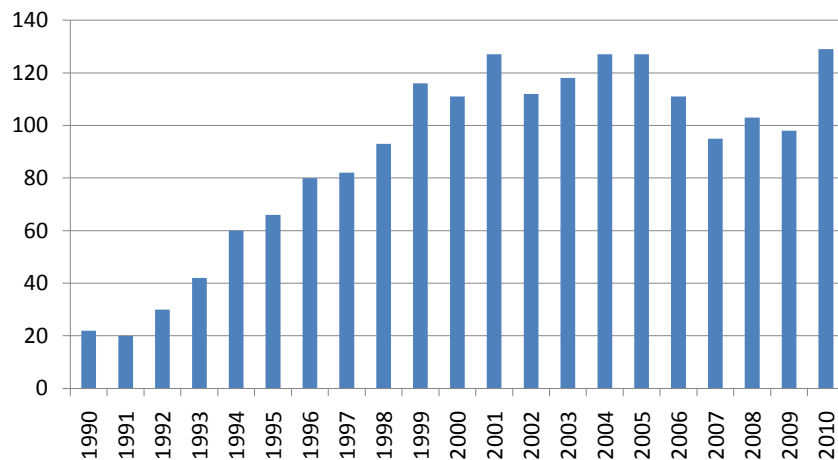
In fall 2009, LSU enrolled 27,992 students and employed 1,308 faculty members. LSU is located in the southern part of the state, in East Baton Rouge Parish, nestled alongside the Mississippi River. The region is a transportation hub, including a major port, railways, and interstate highways, and the site of a large petrochemical industrial complex. East Baton Rouge Parish, which encompasses the city of Baton Rouge, has a population of 429,000, and is amid the fastest growing region of the state. In 1970, 1 in 8 Louisiana residents lived in a five parish area that included East Baton Rouge parish (Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa parishes); in 2010 1 in 5 Louisiana residents live in this five parish region; by 2030 it is projected that 1 in 3 Louisiana residents will live within these boundaries.

Baton Rouge is the state capital of Louisiana. The state government provides a rich environment and steadily increasing demand for the teaching, research, and service activities provided by the MPA faculty. Many state agencies employ MPA graduates, with a number of them rising to the highest ranks of leadership and management, and who in turn both recruit new graduates and recommend their junior staff to enroll in the program, as well as providing internship opportunities for MPA students. In addition to state government, the MPA program serves agencies at the federal and local levels, as well as private and nonprofit sectors, particularly the rapidly expanding healthcare field.

Student Population.

Enrollment in the MPA program has grown dramatically since its inception (see figure 1).¹ In the early 1990s the program had about 20 students; by the mid-1990s the program had grown to an enrollment of 60 to 80 students; and since 1999 program enrollment has expanded to approximately 100 students with 2010 seeing an enrollment of 129.

MPA Enrollment 1990 to 2010



The MPA student population is approximately 54% traditional, pre-service students and 46% in-service students who are employed full-time. A majority of pre-service students have part-time employment, including graduate assistantships. Typical working students within the MPA program range from entry-level to mid-level management and represent a very broad range of professional interests including federal, state, and local government agencies; state legislative staff; healthcare professionals; education, social and welfare services; cultural services; and a variety of other governmental, nonprofit and

¹ These numbers don't count non-matriculated students enrolled in the Graduate School, but who have not yet formally declared Public Administration as their degree. Students in different disciplines may take MPA courses and these students are not counted in the MPA enrollment numbers.

proprietary organizations. In 2010 the MPA student body was 34 percent African-American; slightly higher than the 32 percent of the state's population for this ethnic group. In 2010 the LSU MPA student enrollment was 37 percent male and 63 percent female.

Mission of the PAI as defined in 1984 and reiterated in 2002

The Public Administration Institute was initiated in 1984 as a separate division within the College of Business Administration.² It has consistently served the mission defined then as:

With an overarching philosophy to improve public governance, particularly in Louisiana, the mission of the Public Administration Institute in the E.J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University is to: (1) Prepare talented and diverse Master of Public Administration students to manage and lead public, nonprofit, and private sector organizations and programs by providing them with the highest quality graduate education and insuring they receive the specific competencies, knowledge, skills, and values that are essential for ethical, accountable, and effective practice; (2) Conduct cutting-edge scholarship consistent with the excellence embodied in the Research I ranking of Louisiana State University and enhance the Institute's reputation for prominence in scholarly research; (3) Establish relationships with the governance and practitioner environment that foster a professional focus to public administration, and provide expertise to public, nonprofit, and private organizations that contributes solutions to the public challenges of our times.

As of 2010 the faculty has decided to update the mission, but not change its ultimate focus on teaching and understanding, research and discovery, and public service and community engagement.

Mission of the PAI as Refined and Updated in 2010

The Public Administration Institute will consistently serve the following mission:

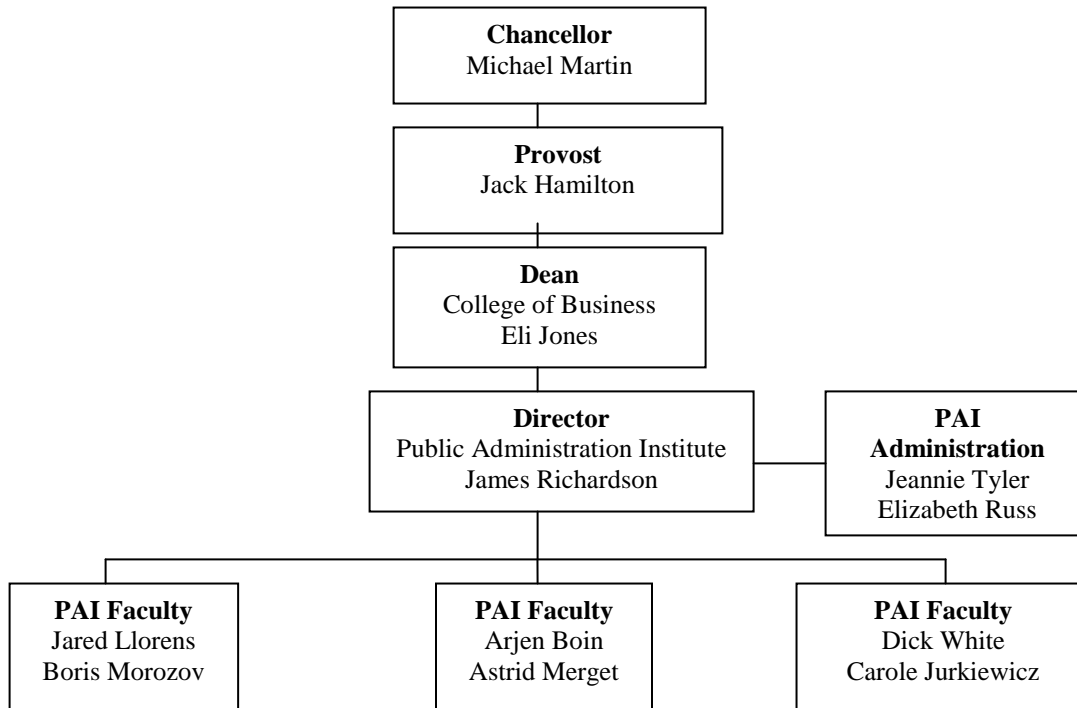
Advance knowledge and excellence in the practice of governance by educating students to lead, engage in the highest quality scholarship, and foster solution-focused relationships with local, state, and national government, nonprofit, and proprietary organizations.

² The MPA program was first started in 1972 with its first graduates in 1974, but the Public Administration Institute was not created until 1974.

The Public Administration Institute of the E.J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University maintains three primary foci in fulfilling its mission: 1) prepare Master of Public Administration students to manage and lead public, nonprofit, and private sector organizations and programs by providing them with the highest quality graduate education and by ensuring they graduate with the specific competencies, knowledge, skills, and values that are essential for ethical, accountable, and effective administration. 2) accomplish prominence in scholarly research consistent with the excellence embodied in the Research I ranking of Louisiana State University and the standards of NASPAA, and 3) establish and strengthen relationships with local, state, and national government, nonprofit, and proprietary organizations and provide solution-based expertise that focuses on the key societal challenges of our times.

The Public Administration Institute is an autonomous unit, currently one of seven academic departments within the E.J. Ourso College of Business. The Director of the PAI holds all traditional department-head functions with responsibility for budget, personnel, policy and academic matters regarding the department and its programs. The Director reports to the Dean of the College of Business (see figure 2).

Figure 2. PAI Organizational Chart



Learning and Diversity

The objective of the MPA program is to prepare pre-service and in-service students for management and leadership roles in public service, as well as the nonprofit and private sectors. The core curriculum provides a comprehensive, contemporary foundation of values, knowledge and skills that are necessary for public service management and leadership. The program is dedicated to securing a diverse student population reflecting the diversity of the state of Louisiana and the country.

The MPA curriculum provides an array of core competencies that address public service as a profession, its role in modern society, its ethical norms and historical development, and skill development in areas that contemporary managers and leaders require, such as human resource management, public budgeting, finance, statistics, organizational behavior, ethics, policy making and program evaluation. Pre-service students are required to complete an internship, supervised by a faculty member, in order to ensure appropriate experience prior to their

graduation. Likewise, in-service students are required to take a practicum course that modifies the internship requirements to better suit experienced students and to integrate their coursework into their current profession.

Core courses are taught at night so both full-time and part-time students can be accommodated. All courses taught within the PAI are graduate courses at the 5000 or 7000 level. Class size varies from 15 to over 50. Multiple sections of certain core courses are offered in order to keep the class size at the 20 to 30 limit. For example, two sections of the Introduction to Public Administration are offered each fall and a third section in the spring, with each section comprising 20 to 30 students. Three sections of Statistics were offered in the fall 2009 in order to keep class size at about 25 per class.

Admission to LSU's Graduate School and the MPA program is based on the following requirements: (1) a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; (2) satisfactory grade point average on all undergraduate and graduate coursework; (3) satisfactory scores on the combined verbal and quantitative portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the GMAT where appropriate; (4) professional experience; and (5) three letters of recommendation. The PAI examines an applicant's entire portfolio before making a decision to admit an applicant to the program. This comprehensive assessment is important since there is a wide range of applicants, including applicants who have been out of school for a number of years, but have very successful work experience; applicants who have worked with a number of nonprofit organizations and have illustrated a concern for public service; and applicants who are just graduating from an undergraduate institution and ready to pursue a professional degree.

The Public Administration Institute is responsible for determining its own degree requirements, subject to meeting the minimum degree requirements set by LSU Graduate School. The MPA program is 42 credit hours. The Graduate School requires a minimum GPA of 3.0 as a graduation and exit requirement, which the PAI follows.

CORE COURSES

The Public Administration Institute requires the following courses:

PADM 5600 - *Economics* – (3 credit hours)

PADM 5010 - *Statistics* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7910 – *Public Administration Theory and Practice* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7911 – *Organizational Analysis for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (3 Credit Hours)

PADM 7914 – *Public Budgeting* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7912 – *Personnel Policy* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7710 - *Financial Management* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7917 - *Program Evaluation* - (3 credit hours)

ECON 4110 - *Public Finance* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7850 - *Internship for Pre-Service Students* - (3 credit hours)

OR

PADM 7851 - *Practicum for In-Service Students* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7900 – *Public Administration Colloquium* - (3 credit hours)

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students take a minimum of 9 credits (three courses) beyond the common curriculum components. The PAI requires each student to select an area of specialization. The student selects these courses in consultation with the Director of the PAI. Courses taken in the area of specialization must be approved by the Director of the PAI. Areas of specialization are listed as guides to the students as they consider the different areas that might be available at LSU. The PAI currently offers the following courses that can be used as courses in an area of specialization, but students are permitted to select courses across the university:

PADM 7610 - *Healthcare Organization and Finance* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7620 - *Strategic Management of Healthcare Organizations* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7640 - *Legal and Ethical Issues in Healthcare Management* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7902 – *Public Policy* – (3 credit hours)

PADM 7915 – *Technology and Innovation in the Public Sector* – (3 credit hours)

PADM 7916 - *State and Local Government Administration* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7920 - *Ethics in the Public Service* - (3 credit hours)

PADM 7980 – *Crisis Management* – (3 credit hours)

PADM 7800 – *Independent Study in Public Administration* – (3-6 Credit Hours)

Student placement

The Public Administration Institute has gained the respect and confidence of people in the state and local governments based on the success the PAI has had in placing its graduates. Selected positions formerly held or now held by MPA graduates are listed in the following table.

Selected Positions in State and Local Government in Louisiana Held by LSU MPA Students	
Under Secretary, Department of Social Services	Fiscal Analysts in Legislative Fiscal Office
Under Secretary, Department of Corrections	Chief Budget Officer for Louisiana Senate
Under Secretary, Department of Economic Development	Louisiana Public Broadcasting
Legislative Fiscal Officer	State Budget Office, Louisiana Division of Administration
Education Policy Advisor to Governor	Office of Finance in Department of Education
Executive Director, Government Office for Homeland Security, LA	Chief Financial Administrator, Los Angeles Fire Department
Assistant to Commissioner of Higher Education	Performance Auditing Office in Legislative Auditor's Office
Budget Officer, LSU Department of Athletics	Chief Administrative Officer for State Court of Appeals
Vice Chancellor, Administration and Finance, LSU	Research Associates for Public Affairs Research Council
Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Administration (the Executive Budget Office)	Human Resource Director for State Civil Service Commission
Fiscal Analysts in Louisiana Senate	Budgeting, Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Athletic Departments at Louisiana State University
Administrator for Police Jury for Parish of Calcasieu	Office of the Mayor, Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish

In addition, many students are working in state agencies such as Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health and Hospitals, the Department of Revenue, and other state and local agencies. LSU MPAs have entered state government in New York, local government in Florida, county government in Los Angeles, local government in Texas, and private and nonprofit institutions around the country. LSU students have also competed successfully at the federal level. Three LSU MPAs are working in the budget division of NASA in Houston, Texas; one LSU MPA is working for the FBI in Washington, DC; two LSU MPAs are working for the Center for the Control of Communicable Diseases in Atlanta, Georgia; one LSU MPA is working for the Federal Trade Commission; one LSU MPA is working for the General Accounting Office in Washington, DC; a number of LSU MPAs are working on the Hill in Washington, DC; and other LSU MPAs are working for nonprofit organizations in the Washington, DC area.

Discovery and Engagement

The research record of the PAI faculty has been outstanding over the years. Current faculty members are active contributors to leading public administration journals, they participate in national conferences and specialized networks, and they are generally considered leading members of their professional societies.

The current seven faculty members have over 65 refereed articles published over the past five years; over 45 chapters in books; over 20 books either written or edited; and, presentations at over 90 national and international conferences and meetings. In addition, the LSU faculty works with over 30 journals, either as Editor, member of Editorial Board, referee for the journal, or some other capacity.

Professor Carole Jurkiewicz was asked by the *Public Administration Review* to edit a special edition of *PAR* on Governance and Disasters. Professor Dick White was asked by *PAR* to prepare an article on former CIA Director, George Tenet. Professor Jared Llorens was asked by the American Society for Public Administration to meet with the Director of the Federal Office of Personnel Management to discuss the connection between the needs of the federal government and the academic study of personnel management. Professor Jim Richardson was asked by the National Tax Association to prepare a paper on tax policy and economic recovery from natural disasters. Professor Astrid Merget is a member of the National Academy of Public Administration. Professor Arjen Boin is now an adjunct professor and a noted international scholar on crisis management. Professor Morovoz has been asked to organize panels of

researchers for the national meetings of the Association of Budgeting and Financial Management.

The PAI has a strong research climate. The normal teaching load per academic year for full-time faculty members is six hours in the fall and six hours in the spring. Each faculty member is expected to have an active research agenda. Each faculty member is also expected to participate in department, college, and university activities and each faculty member is expected to be engaged with services to the profession, ranging from serving as referees for journals, being active on editorial boards of major journals, making presentations at conferences, and providing assistance to professional organizations. LSU has a relatively small faculty so it must have 100 percent engagement in service to the university and service to the profession.

Self monitoring

The Public Administration Institute employs an array of mechanisms, both objective and subjective, to monitor the performance and accomplishment of the PAI mission.

The PAI conducts an annual assessment of the MPA program that follows the NASPAA accreditation guidelines. Student learning outcomes are identified through data gathered each semester by the Teaching Evaluation Instrument and the Exit Surveys, and by the Alumni and Employer Surveys that are distributed every three years.

The most recent Exit Survey results reveal that 90.9% of MPA graduates either “strongly agree” or “agree” that “my professors were good teachers.” The Alumni Survey respondents “strongly agreed” that, “overall the instructors were knowledgeable.”

The PAI has initiated an annual assessment of the MPA program that follows the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation guidelines. Student learning outcomes will be assessed by faculty members reviewing the MPA Portfolio that each student must maintain over his or her academic career in the program. The plan was finalized in the fall 2010 semester and will be implemented in the spring 2011. It will be enhanced and improved in all forthcoming semesters as the MPA faculty works to insure that the MPA graduate is adequately equipped to handle the assignments that will come their way.

3. Planning for the Future

Premises

The immediate and long-range challenges and opportunities for the PAI must be cataloged in terms of its goals and objectives. The strategic plan is built on these premises:

- (1) Maintain and enhance reputation as the premier MPA program in Louisiana and the region and expand our reputation throughout the country;
- (2) Maintain and enhance the academic and professional quality of the MPA program, as well as being student-friendly and student-focused;
- (3) Maintain and enhance the faculty's commitment to scholarship, and professional and public service, including contributions to state and local activities;
- (4) Develop a national profile in the areas of budgeting and finance, human resource management, ethics and public service, and state and local administration;
- (5) Become nationally competitive for students, while maintaining a commitment to the state to provide well-educated and well-trained persons to state and local governments in Louisiana.
- (6) Contribute to the success of the E. J. Ourso College of Business and work with the college on its strategic plan.

Opportunities

An opportunity to increase the number of MPA students exists. With little recruitment and advertising, the program generates growing numbers of applicants through its excellent reputation and word of mouth. With additional faculty resources, the number of students could be increased.

There also is an opportunity to raise admission standards, particularly average GPA and GRE scores, if the pool of applicants is increased substantially. This should be done without abandoning our core market of students, a diverse mix of pre-service and in-service applicants, whose academic credentials may not always be stellar due to the much publicized nature of the public school system in the State, but still possess the motivation and potential to become outstanding leaders and managers in the public service. We want to preserve the unique

character of the MPA program. The faculty has approved an admissions process that evaluates the applicant's entire portfolio, including work experience, volunteer activities, three letters of recommendation, and GPA and GRE scores. The purpose of the admission process is to discover students who will be successful in the program and successful in the public service.

Opportunities exist for the PAI to offer additional programs that will improve governance in Louisiana and elsewhere. The faculty has initiated a continuing education programs for court administrators and is investigating a program to update graduates of MPA programs on emerging ideas and processes being developed in the academy and other work places in the world.

Because of the small faculty size, a PhD program has never been seriously considered. The faculty periodically discusses the pros and cons of initiating a PhD program. Such a program would require extra time in guiding PhD students and in teaching intensive PhD-level courses. It would also provide collaborative research opportunities. However, it would divert attention from our core mission: offering a high-level MPA program that builds on sound academic research. At this point in time, the development of a PhD program is, at best, a distant goal.

Opportunities do exist to raise the research profile of the PAI. The faculty continues to produce theoretically sound and practitioner-relevant research. LSU's hires of new faculty members have increased the caliber of the faculty and the commitment to research and quality. In terms of output, PAI already competes with the highest ranked programs in the country. The PAI will continue its climb to higher national rankings of the program.

Goals

Following the institutional self-description and based on the core mission, the Public Administration Institute faculty has specified the following goals:

1. ***Broaden the effort to recruit talented and motivated students who demonstrate the potential for success at the graduate level.***

Strategies:

- Aggressive recruiting from Louisiana universities/colleges
 - Maintaining professional connections to other universities in state
 - Providing information on LSU MPA to other universities

- Keeping LSU MPA graduates who have undergraduate degrees from other state universities aware of our efforts to recruit from their undergraduate alma mater
- Develop a regional and national recruiting program.
 - Retain our advertisement in the PA Times
 - Provide information at various meetings and conferences
 - Support national and regional conferences such as SeCOPA in New Orleans in 2011
- Gradually increase GRE, GPA, and overall quality of the accepted students.
 - Maintain record on success of students based on GRE, GPA, work experience, volunteer activities, and other indicators of possible success in MPA program
 - Annual meeting of faculty to review applicants and monitor success of accepted students in program related to their GPA, GRE, work experience, and other inputs
 - Participate in national recruiting programs such as the Idealist.org Graduate Degree Fair for the Public Good which we attended in the fall of 2009 at Tulane University.
 - program at Tulane University that we participated in fall 2009
- Aggressive recruiting of economically disadvantaged students
 - Ask current students in program to speak about program
 - Connect current students and recent graduates to applicants considering LSU
 - Maintain the PAI commitment to having a diverse student population

2. Provide the highest quality graduate education by providing excellence in instruction and an innovative curriculum.

Strategies:

- Further improve student course evaluations, annual faculty reviews, and exit surveys.
 - Analyze all exit interviews and compare from year to year
 - Compare LSU course evaluations to evaluations from other universities
 - Have interviews with graduates
 - Assess MPA portfolios as outlined in Matrix of Learning Outcomes

- Maintain the core curriculum in line with NASPAA core competencies so that graduates have the most up-to-date knowledge when they enter the work force
 - Examine on annual basis the materials covered in each course to be sure core competencies are covered
- Introduce new areas of specializations that fit with the expertise of our faculty
 - Take advantage of university opportunities that tie in with expertise of faculty
 - Use adjuncts to complement faculty expertise
 - Connect faculty interests to university initiatives
- Investigate the need and possibilities for a distance learning program which makes the program available for state and local government employees throughout the state and, as resources permit, throughout the nation and international community.

3. *Conduct cutting-edge, high quality scholarly research.*

Strategies

- Assist junior faculty in having their work published in leading journals of public administration and cognate fields
 - Maintain financial incentives for junior faculty to publish in leading journals
 - Maintain promotional criteria as incentive for junior faculty to publish in leading journals
 - Provide mentoring for junior faculty
- Maintain summer research grants for junior faculty members
- Create a higher profile for PAI's research output, which will generate opportunities to participate in research projects both on and of campus.
 - Improve website announcement of major publications
 - Create working papers on PAI website
 - Make announcements in college newsletter
- Provide information on major research projects so the university can provide public information on such research projects
- Invite visiting professors and researchers to campus to work with students and faculty members
- Participate in multi-disciplinary research projects on campus and with other campuses

- Encourage university to provide support for faculty to seek outside grants and contracts
4. *Deepen relationships with the governance and practitioner.*

Strategies

- Establish advisory board that contains PAI alumni now working in public government.
 - PAI Advisory Board
 - PAI Advisory Board Auxiliary in Washington, DC
 - Faculty will maintain active participation in working with governments
 - Working with local government
 - Working with State government
 - Providing information to federal government
 - Include a Visiting Executive within the program on a regular basis. This person could be a former Chief of Staff of the Governor or Commissioner of Administration; a former U.S. Senator; or a person who had worked in a federal or state agency at a high level position.
5. *Maintain our public connections to alumni, state and local agencies, and general public*

Strategies

- Retain fall and spring student/alumni luncheons
- Maintain MPA Alumni of the Year
- Work with state and local governments on advisory boards or other commissions as requested
- Work with student organization for PAISA events
- Be good citizens

4. **The LSU MPA Program in 2020**—a number of benchmarks that we expect to accomplish by 2020 based on the strategic plan

1. A MPA program in top 40 in the nation.
2. 10 faculty members to provide education and training for the students.
3. A program that has been accredited and reaccredited.
4. A foundation of excellence program as selected by LSU campus.
5. A series of continuing education programs for court administrators and others public administrators

6. An ongoing continuing education program for updating LSU MPA graduates
7. A nationally recognized speaker series of national scholars and public administrators